

Official Report of the
One Hundred Fifty-third
Annual General

CONFERENCE

of The Church of Jesus Christ
of Latter-day Saints

held in the Tabernacle
Salt Lake City, Utah

April 2 and 3, 1983

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THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTY-THIRD ANNUAL GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

The 153rd Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, on Saturday, April 2, 1983, at 10:00 A.M.

The general sessions of the conference were held at 10:00 A.M. and 2:00 P.M. on Saturday and Sunday, April 2 and 3, 1983. The general welfare session was not held during this conference. The general priesthood meeting was held in the Tabernacle on Saturday, April 2, 1983 at 6:00 P.M. The change from 7:00 P.M. to 6:00 P.M. for the priesthood meeting was made for the convenience of the brethren in the eastern time zone.

President Spencer W. Kimball watched the conference on television in his apartment in the Hotel Utah due to ill health. President Marion G. Romney, First Counselor in the First Presidency, watched the conference on television in his home because of ill health. President Gordon B. Hinckley, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted the Saturday afternoon, general priesthood, and Sunday morning sessions. President Ezra Taft Benson, President of the Council of the Twelve, conducted the Saturday morning and Sunday afternoon sessions.

Television and radio stations carried portions or all of some of the conference sessions to large audiences throughout the world. The general sessions and the priesthood session were also carried via satellite transmission to more than 550 stake centers. The general priesthood session was also carried by closed-circuit transmission to approximately 1,388 locations in many countries.

General Authorities present

The following General Authorities of the Church attended one or more of the general sessions:

*The First Presidency:*¹ Gordon B. Hinckley.

The Council of the Twelve: Ezra Taft Benson, Mark E. Petersen, Howard W. Hunter, Thomas S. Monson, Boyd K. Packer, Marvin J. Ashton, Bruce R. McConkie, L. Tom Perry, David B. Haight, James E. Faust, and Neal A. Maxwell.

The First Quorum of the Seventy:
Presidents: Franklin D. Richards, J. Thomas Fyans, Carlos E. Asay, M. Russell Ballard, Dean L. Larsen, Royden G. Derrick, and G. Homer Durham. *Additional Members:* Marion D. Hanks, A. Theodore Tuttle, Theodore M. Burton, Paul H. Dunn, Hartman Rector, Jr., Loren C. Dunn, Robert L. Simpson, Rex D. Pinegar, Wm. Grant Bangerter, Robert D. Hales, Adney Y. Komatsu, Joseph B. Wirthlin, Gene R. Cook, Charles Didier, William R. Bradford, George P. Lee, John H. Groberg, Jacob de Jager, Vaughn J. Featherstone, Robert E. Wells, James M. Paramore, Richard G. Scott, Hugh W. Pinnock, F. Enzo Busche, Yoshihiko Kikuchi, Ronald E. Poelman, Derek A. Cuthbert, Robert L. Backman, Rex C. Reeve, Sr., F. Burton Howard, Ted E. Brewerton, Jack H. Goaslind, Jr., and Angel Abrea.

The Presiding Bishopric: Victor L. Brown, H. Burke Peterson, and J. Richard Clarke.

Emeritus General Authorities: Eldred G. Smith, Sterling W. Sill, Henry D. Taylor, Bernard P. Brockbank, James A. Cullimore, Joseph Anderson, John H. Vandenberg, and O. Leslie Stone.

¹President Spencer W. Kimball and President Marion G. Romney were excused due to ill health.

Other authorities present

Other authorities of the Church in attendance included Regional Representatives, presidents of stakes and their counselors, presidents of temples,

bishops of wards, and presidencies and members of the Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthood quorums.

Many general, stake, and ward auxiliary officers also attended.

FIRST DAY MORNING MEETING

FIRST SESSION

The first general session of the conference convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, on Saturday, April 2, 1983, at 10:00 A.M. President Ezra Taft Benson, President of the Council of the Twelve, conducted this session.

The music for the opening session was provided by the Tabernacle Choir with Jerold Ottley conducting and Robert Cundick at the organ.

Before the commencement of the meeting, the Tabernacle Choir sang "Lead Me into Life Eternal" without announcement.

President Hinckley then made the following remarks:

President Gordon B. Hinckley

We regret that President Spencer W. Kimball is unable to be with us this morning. He is in his apartment in the Hotel Utah, where he will watch the conference on television.

We regret also that President Romney is not well this morning and asked to be excused. He will watch the conference proceedings on television at his home.

President Ezra Taft Benson, President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will conduct this general session of the conference and will also conduct the concluding general session of the conference tomorrow afternoon.

President Ezra Taft Benson

My beloved brethren and sisters, we are pleased to welcome those who are gathered here in the Tabernacle in Salt Lake City for this, the first general session of the 153rd Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We also welcome those who are participating by means of television or radio, and also the many who are watching these proceedings in over five hundred and fifty stake centers throughout the United States to which the conference is being carried by satellite transmission.

We deeply regret the absence this morning of our beloved prophet and leader, President Spencer W. Kimball. In behalf of all the General Authorities and the leaders and members of the Church participating in this conference, we extend to him and to his dear wife, Camilla, our love and blessings.

There is an overflow congregation in the newly renovated Assembly Hall on Temple Square, where Elders Franklin D. Richards and Paul H. Dunn preside.

We extend a special welcome to government, education, and civic leaders who are present.

The Tabernacle Choir, under the direction of Jerold Ottley with Robert Cundick at the organ, is providing the music for this session.

The Choir opened this session by singing "Lead Me into Life Eternal."

The Choir will now sing "Oh Lord, I Would Hear Thy Word." Fol-

lowing the singing, the invocation will be offered by Elder Robert L. Simpson, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The Choir sang "Oh Lord, I Would Hear Thy Word."

Elder Robert L. Simpson offered the invocation.

President Benson

We note with regret the passing of President N. Eldon Tanner, who at the time of his death was serving as First Counselor in the First Presidency. Following President Tanner's death, President Spencer W. Kimball designated President Marion G. Romney as his First Counselor and President Gordon B. Hinckley as his Second Counselor. And this action was later approved by the Council of the First Presidency and Council of the Twelve. In view of this, it is proposed that we sustain President Marion G. Romney as First Counselor in the First Presidency and President Gordon B.

Hinckley as Second Counselor in the First Presidency.

All in favor please manifest it. Any opposed may so manifest it.

With the exception of these Brethren we have just sustained, and noting the passing of our dear friend and brother, Elder LeGrand Richards of the Council of the Twelve, there have been no changes in the General Authorities since the last conference. It is proposed, therefore, that we sustain all of the General Authorities and general officers of the Church as at present constituted.

Those in favor please manifest it. Those opposed by the same sign.

President Benson

The Tabernacle Choir will now sing "He, Watching over Israel."

President Gordon B. Hinckley, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, will then address us.

The Tabernacle Choir sang "He, Watching over Israel."

President Gordon B. Hinckley

I hope you enjoyed that magnificent anthem presented by the Choir—"He, watching over Israel, slumbers not, nor sleeps." It is from Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, and the words are adapted from the Psalms. (See Psalm 121:4.)

As we unite in this great world conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, I should like to use those wonderful, reassuring words as something of a theme. I pray for the direction of the Holy Spirit.

President Spencer W. Kimball

President Kimball is unable to be with us in person. However, he pre-

sides and is in his hotel apartment across the street where he joins with us as the proceedings are carried to him by closed-circuit television. He is not in the hospital, as rumor would have it, nor has he been for many months. He is not in a coma, as some have said. He dresses each day. But he is weak, and his body is tired. He recently commemorated his eighty-eighth birthday and is feeling the effects of his advanced age and the cumulative effects of the surgical procedures he has undergone in the past. What a magnificent example he has been for all of us. He has given impetus to this work in a remarkable way. The whole Church has quickened its pace and lengthened

its stride in response to his clarion call. He has been a prophet to us, a prophet whose vision and revelation have reached out to the people of the entire earth, regardless of nation, or color, or station in life, freely offering the matchless blessings of the gospel of Jesus Christ to all who will accept. He sends his love and blessing to all of you. I was with him yesterday, and he did so. We love him and we pray for him. Our hearts incline toward him with affection, and our pleadings in his behalf ascend to our Father in Heaven.

Presidents Romney and Tanner

President Romney is likewise experiencing difficulties. He too is feeling the effects of age and the natural wearing process of scores of years of vigorous and unrelenting activity in furthering the work of the Lord. He has asked that he be excused from speaking. We shall hear a message from him which he prepared earlier and which will be read by his son, Bishop George J. Romney.

We greatly miss President N. Eldon Tanner, who served as a Counselor to four Presidents of the Church. He passed away last November 27. During months previous to this, notwithstanding illness, he continued to give from his great store of experience, wisdom, and inspiration.

We likewise shall miss in this conference the stirring testimony of Elder LeGrand Richards of the Council of the Twelve. For forty-five years he stood at the pulpit in this Tabernacle bearing witness to the truth of this "marvellous work and a wonder" (Isaiah 29:14). Millions were touched by the eloquence and sincerity of his testimony.

Divine genius of Church organization

We feel deeply the absence of these great leaders. Their absence has

placed upon others of us an awesome responsibility. I thank the Lord for his sustaining blessings. I thank my brethren of the Council of the Twelve for their great kindness and their strength and wisdom. For twenty years I was a member of that unique and wonderful quorum of able and devoted men, each called of God and endowed with the holy apostleship. I love them as my brethren. Each holds the keys of this dispensation in latent reserve. Inherent in that divine residual is the assured ongoing leadership of the Church.

I am grateful for my brethren of the First Quorum of the Seventy and of the Presiding Bishopric. Brethren and sisters, there is unity in the leadership of the Church. I think that unity has never been stronger.

The divine genius of the organization of this work and of calls to leadership is evident. The General Authorities are all individuals, each with his own personality. Each brings to his responsibilities a wide variety of experience and background. When matters come up for discussion in the leading councils of the Church, each is free to express his views. As one observes that interesting process at work, it is fascinating to witness the power of the Holy Spirit influence these men. Initial differences, never sharp but nonetheless perceptible, soften and meld into an expression of unity. "My house is a house of order," said the Lord. (See D&C 132:8.) In witnessing this process at work, I experience a constant renewal of faith.

I express sincere appreciation also to my brethren and sisters across the world, members of the Church, wherever you may be. I pray that you will be sustained and blessed, that there will be peace in your homes and in your hearts, and that "the pure love of Christ" will be felt in your lives. (See Moroni 7:47.)

"Be still and know that I am God"

Recently while wrestling in my mind with a problem I thought to be of

serious consequence I went to my knees in prayer. There came into my mind a feeling of peace and the words of the Lord, "Be still and know that I am God." I turned to the scripture and read this reassuring statement spoken to the Prophet Joseph Smith 150 years ago: "Let your hearts be comforted concerning Zion; for all flesh is in mine hands; be still and know that I am God" (D&C 101:16).

God is weaving his tapestry according to his own grand design. All flesh is in his hands. It is not our prerogative to counsel him. It is our responsibility and our opportunity to be at peace in our minds and in our hearts, and to know that he is God, that this is his work, and that he will not permit it to fail.

We have no need to fear. We have no need to worry. We have no need to speculate. Our imperative need is to be found doing our duty individually in the callings which have come to us. And because, for the most part, the Latter-day Saints are walking in faith and working with conviction, the Church is consistently growing ever stronger.

Church moving forward

I take occasion now to say to all that the Church is moving forward with great strength and power. I give you my assurance that the work in the office of the First Presidency is current and up to date. Nothing is being neglected, and action is not being postponed. We are operating under direct assignment and authorization from the President of the Church, with whom we frequently meet. It is so also with the work of the Twelve, the Seventy, the Bishopric, and the auxiliary organizations.

We thank the Lord, whose cause this is, for the marvelous growth now

being experienced. The strengthening faith of the people is evident in increased sacrament meeting attendance, in temple attendance, and in the payment of tithes and offerings, which becomes an expression of their love for the Lord and of his generous blessings even in these times of economic distress.

Speaking in this Tabernacle an even hundred years ago, at the April 1883 general conference, President Joseph F. Smith said, "Now, so long as the Latter-day Saints are content to obey the commandments of God, to appreciate the privileges and blessings which they enjoy in the Church, and will use their time, their talents, their substance, in honor to the name of God, to build up Zion, and to establish truth and righteousness in the earth, so long our heavenly Father is bound by His oath and covenant to protect them from every opposing foe, and to help them to overcome every obstacle that can possibly be arrayed against them or thrown in their pathway" (*Journal of Discourses*, 24:176). Those words are as pertinent today as they were when spoken a century ago.

The Almighty is blessing his church and his people. He is watching over them. He neither slumbers nor sleeps as he guides, directs, and moves in his own "mysterious way His wonders to perform" (*Hymns*, no. 48).

Loyalty to our leader

Some express concern that the President of the Church is likely always to be a rather elderly man, to which my response is, "What a blessing!" The work in this dispensation was first put in place through the instrumentality of the Prophet Joseph Smith. He was at the time young and vigorous, one whose mind was not set in the traditions of his day. His was a youthful mind which the Lord could mold as fresh, moist clay as he initiated his work.

Joseph's successor was relatively young when he was faced with the ter-

rible responsibility of leading an entire people across the wilderness to pioneer a new land.

But the basics of our doctrine are now well in place, and we are firmly established as a people, at least until the Lord should mandate another move. We do not need innovation. We need devotion in adherence to divinely spoken principles. We need loyalty to our leader, whom God has appointed. He is our prophet, our seer and revelator. We shall never be left without a prophet if we will live worthy of one. He does not need to be youthful. He has and will continue to have younger men to travel over the earth in the work of the ministry. He is the presiding high priest, the repository of all of the keys of the holy priesthood, and the voice of revelation from God to his people.

There is an old proverb which says, "Youth for action. Age for wisdom."

To my mind there is something tremendously reassuring in knowing that for the foreseeable future we shall have a President who has been disciplined and schooled, tried and tested, whose fidelity to the work and whose integrity in the cause have been tempered in the forge of service, whose faith has matured, and whose nearness to God has been cultivated over a period of many years.

I do not worry. I am honored in the opportunity to serve with him who now stands as the prophet to this people. And when there comes the time for change, whenever that might be according to the will of the Lord, I shall sustain without reservation him whom the Lord appoints under the process he has established for succession in his kingdom, for I know that this is God's work and that he is watching over it now as he has through the years that have gone before. He makes no mistakes.

I have had some opportunity to observe this remarkable process at work.

Growth during last twenty-five years

Today is an anniversary for me. It was at the April general conference twenty-five years ago that I was first sustained a General Authority, an Assistant to the Twelve. Great and impressive to me have been my opportunities during this past quarter of a century. My assigned ministry has taken me over the earth to many lands, to various places where I have seen with my own eyes both peace and war, both prosperity and terrible poverty, both liberty and oppression. I have witnessed the miracles that come with faith. I have seen the evidence of true goodness and greatness in men and women living under a great variety of circumstances. I have observed in a very intimate and wonderful way the workings of the power of the Almighty among his children. I have noted the factors which lead to success or otherwise in the growth of the Church and the development of its members.

When I became a General Authority twenty-five years ago, there were 251 stakes in the Church. Today there are 1,402. Then there were 2,362 wards and independent branches. We now have 13,616. The statistics read in that 1958 conference indicated a membership on December 31, 1957, of 1,488,000. The comparable figure for December 31, 1982, was 5,165,000. Marvelous has been the growth. To use the vernacular, "We must be doing something right." No, we have not done it. It is the Lord who has engineered and directed those forces which have brought about so great a harvest.

Follow a steady and uncompromising course

There is a continuity and consistency in this work that is remarkable to

witness and experience. Its strength and power lie in the ability of every member and every earnest investigator to know for himself or herself by the power of the Holy Spirit that it is true. Critics may wear out their lives in trying to deny or demean or cast doubt, but all who ask of God in faith have the assurance that by the voice of the Spirit will come the certainty that this work is divine.

We need not fear the future if we hold fast to revealed principles. On one occasion the Prophet Joseph Smith said: "Go in all meekness, in sobriety, and preach Jesus Christ and Him crucified; not to contend with others on account of their faith, or systems of religion, but pursue a steady course" (*History of the Church*, 2:431).

I like those words, "pursue a steady course." I hope that we shall never forget them. The Church has grown consistently stronger because those who have gone before us have pursued a steady course. There are those who would fracture our strength by leading us in the pursuit of objectives which are not pertinent to the central mission of the Church. We are constantly invited, yes, even strongly urged, to get out and march with others for this cause or that cause. There are some causes with which we properly should be involved, which are directly related to the Church, its mission, and the well-being of its people. The determination of these must be left to those who have been called to leadership. Such causes will be few, since we must husband our strength and resources for the far greater obligation to pursue a steady course in building the kingdom of God in the earth.

Our great, basic message to the world is that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God; that he gave his life as a sacrifice for all mankind; that he rose from the grave that first Easter morning, "the firstfruits of them that slept" (1 Corinthians 15:20); that "as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Corinthians

15:22); that he lives, our resurrected Lord and Master.

As has been said before from this pulpit, he has given us a threefold mission: first, the teaching of the restored gospel to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people; second, the building of the Saints in their faith and encouraging them in all of their activities to walk in obedience to the commandments of the Lord; and third, the great work of salvation for the dead. This vast mission contemplates all generations of mankind—those who have gone before, all who live upon the earth, and those who will yet be born. It is larger than any race or nation or generation. It encompasses all mankind. It is a cause without parallel. The fruits of its labors are everlasting in their consequences. In the pursuit of that mission we must follow a steady and uncompromising course and never be enticed therefrom.

Accelerate missionary work

We must enhance and enlarge our missionary endeavor. President Kimball has repeatedly called for an acceleration of this work.

I know that our young men are under a great obligation to qualify themselves through education to fill positions of responsibility in the world. Their time is precious. But I do not hesitate to promise that the time spent in faithful and devoted service as a missionary declaring the Master will only add to their qualifications for positions of responsibility in the future. Regardless of the vocation they choose to pursue, they will be better qualified in their powers of expression, in their habits of industry, in the value they place on training, in the integrity of their lives, and in their recognition of a higher source of strength and power than that which lies within their native capacity.

Gauge perfecting of Saints by love

We must be more diligent and effective as we pursue a steady course in instructing and perfecting the lives of our own people. We must hold to first principles. We must prioritize our teachings to emphasize that which is of the greatest worth.

"Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying,

"Master, which is the great commandment in the law?

"Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

"This is the first and great commandment.

"And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

"On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (Matthew 22:35-40).

This must be the foundation of our instruction: love of God and love for and service to others—neighbors, family, and all with whom we have association. That which we teach must be constantly gauged against these two standards established by the Lord. If we shall do so, this work will continue to roll forward. We shall become as a city set upon a hill whose light cannot be hid. (See Matthew 5:14.)

He slumbers not, nor sleeps

Then, in a spirit of love and consecration, we must extend ourselves in the work of redemption of the dead through service in the temples of the

Lord. This service more nearly approaches the divine work of the Son of God, who gave his life for others, than does any other work of which I know.

My brothers and sisters, if we will pursue a steady course in carrying out this great triad of responsibility, then we shall be participants with our Father in Heaven in the accomplishment of his eternal purposes. You and I may fail as individuals and miss the blessing. But his work cannot fail. There will always be those he will raise up to accomplish it. He has declared: "Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand" (Isaiah 14:24).

I bear witness to you this morning that he, watching over Israel, slumbers not nor sleeps. God help us to be faithful to the great trust he has placed in us, I humbly pray as I invoke the blessings of the Lord upon you, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The Tabernacle Choir sang "God of Power, God of Right" without announcement.

President Benson

President Gordon B. Hinckley, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, has just addressed us, followed by the Tabernacle Choir singing "God of Power, God of Right."

We shall now be pleased to listen to Elder Neal A. Maxwell, a member of the Council of Twelve Apostles. Following Elder Maxwell's address, the Choir and congregation will join in singing "Hope of Israel."

Elder Neal A. Maxwell

Hopelessness—a modern problem

For many years now—in literature, film, and music—we have wit-

nessed increasing expressions of a profound sense of what has come to be called existential despair, a hopelessness beyond hope. Granted, the

human scene also includes many individuals who go happily about life's labors untouched by these feelings. But the holocausts and the wars have taken their terrible toll of hope among twentieth-century man. Said one eminent scientist, "The most poignant problem of modern life is probably man's feeling that life has lost its significance, . . . [a] view . . . no longer limited to the philosophical or literary *avant garde*. It is spreading to all social and economic groups and affects all manifestations of life" (Rene Dubos, *So Human an Animal* [New York: Scribners, 1968], pp. 14-15).

One need not question either the reluctance or the sincerity with which some despairing individuals have come to such wrong conclusions. In fact, one feels compassion and desires to reach out to them in genuine entreaty!

One recent television drama, in its closing scene in a cemetery, conveyed well this confusion and purposelessness, as one character lamented poignantly:

"Are all men's lives . . . broken, tumultuous, agonized and unromantic, punctuated by screams, imbecilities, agonies and death? Who knows? . . . I don't know. . . . Why can't people have what they want? The things were all there to content everybody, yet everybody got the wrong thing. I don't know. It's beyond me. It's all a darkness" ("The Good Soldier," a dramatization of the novel by Ford Madox Ford).

Lamentations, revelations, fears, and reassurances

But such poignancy of view is no guarantee of the accuracy of the view. Moreover, in human affairs, erroneous and unchallenged assertions sometimes assume an undeserved aura of truth. While a response to this hopelessness may not create conviction in disbelievers, it can bolster believers against the silent erosion of their own convictions.

Besides, as an ancient prophet correctly observed, sadness and badness are mutually reinforcing, for "despair cometh because of iniquity" (Moroni 10:22).

Let us, therefore, place several such lamentations beside the revelations of God. The expressions of despair beside the divine annunciations of hope. The fears of extinction alongside the reassurances of the Resurrection. The provincialism beside the universalism of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Then we shall see how myopic some mortals are, like absorbed children in a tree house pretending they are brave and alone!

The lamentations: Man lives in "an unsponsored universe," a universe "without a master," which "cares nothing for [man's] hopes and fears," an "empire of chance" in which man falls victim to "the trampling march of unconscious power" (Bertrand Russell, "A Free Man's Worship," in *Mysticism and Logic and Other Essays* [London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1950], p. 57).

The revelations: "God himself that formed the earth . . . created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited" (Isaiah 45:18).

"For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand" (Psalm 95:7).

"For behold, this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39).

"Men are, that they might have joy" (2 Nephi 2:25).

"But the very hairs of your head are all numbered." (See Matthew 10:29-30.)

Not only are the hairs of our heads numbered, but the planets also: "But only an account of this earth, and the inhabitants thereof, give I unto you. For behold, there are many worlds that have passed away by the word of my power. And there are many that now stand, and innumerable are they unto man; but all things are numbered unto

me, for they are mine and I know them" (Moses 1:35).

The fears: Mankind is destined to extinction . . . there is nothing we can do. We have no personal life beyond the grave; there is no God. "Fate knows nor wrath nor ruth" (James Thomson, *The City of Dreadful Night and Other Poems* [London: Bertram Dobell, 1899], pp. 29–30, 35–36).

The reassurances: "And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose,

"And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many" (Matthew 27:52–53; see also 3 Nephi 23:9–11).

"O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" (1 Corinthians 15:55).

"O how great the plan of our God!" (2 Nephi 9:13).

Immortality and accountability are intertwined

Some despair who are, as Peter said, willingly ignorant (see 2 Peter 3:5) or, as Nephi said, who will not search or understand great knowledge (see 2 Nephi 32:7). For these, a pessimistic philosophy is "pleasing unto the carnal mind" (Alma 30:53). Why? Because behavioral permissiveness flourishes amid a sense of hopelessness. Because if human appetites are mistakenly viewed as the only authentic reality and "now" as the only moment which matters, why should one check-rein any impulse or defer any gratification? Hence, immortality and accountability are intertwined!

Yes, there are some who live without hope who, though having reached such a wrong conclusion, nevertheless maintain right conduct. In such decent individuals, the light of Christ, though unacknowledged, burns still. (See D&C 84:46.) If it were not so, we would despise a Gandhi and admire a Hitler, instead of feeling just the opposite!

Such spreading pessimism does not necessarily mean "back to the catacombs" for Christians, or that secular Caesars will soon reopen the Colosseum. But, already, there are would-be Caesars who will refuse to settle for citizens who render to Caesar only that which is his—and unto God all that is His. (See Matthew 22:21.)

This sense of despair is further intensified by the demonstrated emptiness of materialism. Increased goods will not suffice if men display decreased goodness. Likewise, the mere accumulation of knowledge without purpose and of information without wisdom constitutes ever learning but never coming to a knowledge of the truth. (See 2 Timothy 3:7.)

Afflicted with anguish, some wander to and fro upon the earth in search of truth without knowing where to find it. (See Amos 8:11–12; D&C 123:12.) One such prominent wanderer was described by a colleague: "It is strange how he persists . . . in wandering to-and-fro. . . . He can neither believe, nor be comfortable in his unbelief" (Nathaniel Hawthorne, 20 Nov. 1856 in *English Notebooks*, ed. Randall Stewart [New York: MLA], pp. 432–33).

Life is a test

Such is the scene, therefore, of which we are a part. Many reject the scriptures, the moral memory of mankind, and then declare absolutely the absence of absolutes. Others reject the light of the gospel and then grump over the growing darkness. Still others cut themselves off from God and lament the loneliness of the universe. Some pursue the paths of him who openly desires mankind's misery (see 2 Nephi 2:27), and then bemoan their discontent.

The true Christian, of course, does not see life as an easy passage: "The cross comes before the crown and tomorrow is a Monday morning!" (C.S. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory* [Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B.

Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1965], p. 14). With ultimate hope, however, we can live cheerfully amid proximate insecurity. Life is a test in which man must overcome by faith, walking on the strait and narrow path—which is surely no escalator—but the path is there!

And death is not the permanent annihilation of the human personality and individuality! President Brigham Young wisely declared that the preservation of human intelligence and individuality through the Atonement and resurrection “is the greatest gift that ever was bestowed on mankind” (*Journal of Discourses*, 5:53).

Custodians of a gospel of hope

Just as in translating, the Prophet Joseph Smith processed truths more profound than even he then knew—we are custodians and possessors of a gospel of bright and realistic hope. It is a hope for which many hunger more deeply than we can possibly imagine. We poorly serve the cause of the Lord, at times, with programmatic superficiality and by our lack of empathy for those who drift in despair.

Truly, we live and walk on “a streetful of splendid strangers,” whom we are to love and serve even if they are uninterested in us!

Therefore, seen through the eye of faith, the sweep of history is not evidence of a purposeless world. Instead, we see successive waves of humans, as the cast on this mortal stage changes, again and again.

And, however articulate some of those despairing actors are in this human drama, without the gospel light they view only a tiny portion of one scene, not even a whole act. And certainly not the whole play. Such are invited to understand the purposes and instructions of the Author of this drama. But when He finally “comes on the stage, the play is over!”

“And we will prove them herewith”

Meanwhile, we should not impute man’s failures to God! “Remember, remember that it is not the work of God that is frustrated, but the work of men” (D&C 3:3).

Indeed, man’s successes and failures were known from the beginning by the Lord and were taken into account by Him in the unfolding of His plan of salvation. (See 1 Nephi 9:6.) His purposes will be fully achieved.

Justice, love, mercy, and truth will finally prevail in a universe presided over by a Lord who is a determined as well as a loving Tutor. This mortal school is one of which the Father and the Son have solemnly declared, “And we will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them” (Abraham 3:25).

The Lord knows how true individual development requires a setting of agency and opportunity. There is no other way.

“Shine as lights in the world”

No wonder Apostles and prophets have told us not to be moved away from the hope of the gospel, for hope is “an anchor of the soul” (Hebrews 6:19) to “make them sure and steadfast, always abounding in good works” (Ether 12:4; see also Colossians 1:23).

The need, therefore, is for devoted disciples to do as Paul said, to “shine as lights in the world” (Philippians 2:15), illuminating that latter-day valley foreseen by Joel: “Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision” (Joel 3:14; see also Revelation 16:16; Zechariah 14:2).

The very way in which these illuminated individuals “take up [the] cross daily” is a sermon in itself. (See Luke 9:23.) They lead lives not of quiet desperation but of quiet inspiration, constituting what Paul would call

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their "defence and confirmation of the gospel" (Philippians 1:7).

Theirs represents a tinier and quieter history within the larger and noisier human history, a joyful and reassuring drama within the more despairing drama being played out on this planet.

The first scene: A mission president is called on very short notice to replace a mission president who has died. The faithful wife, in one case, brings her husband's body home, while the other sister, just out of surgery, willingly responds to the call to join her husband far from home. Each sister handles her stern challenge trustingly, sweetly, and without murmuring. They understand that sin is the only real tragedy!

A second snapshot: A young mission president, his wife, and five children in spartan circumstances. Water must be boiled and placed in their van as they drive for hours under a scorching sun to be with scattered missionaries and Saints. Adopted children from another culture are now in a home which is developing a celestial culture, where the mother is the children's only school teacher. Uncomplainingly, this family goes effectively about their labors—quite innocent of how special they are! They know they are included in this reassuring declaration: "all flesh is in mine hands; be still and know that I am God" (D&C 101:16).

Next, in Germany a serviceman solicitously rounds up his military friends in his van to go to a special Young Adult conference. One friend cannot be found in time, and this special serviceman left some of his meager and precious savings for an airplane ticket so that individual could then fly to the needed nourishment of that conference. Intrinsically, this benefactor follows the second great commandment and rejects the despairing declaration that "hell is other people."

Another portrait is of a youthful disciple, a woman gymnast paralyzed because of a tumble. She fell not into

paralysis but into saintliness. She becomes a witness in a wheelchair. How tall she stands, and how much she stretches the souls of others! Her deprivation is like an excavation, the readying of a reservoir into which a generous God, one day, will pour the Malachi measure of compensatory blessings, "that there shall not be room enough to receive it" (Malachi 3:10).

Another montage: Widows and widowers, waiting patiently and trustingly for the time of their release, when they can rejoin their eternal companions. Meanwhile, they go about their duties. Like Alma and Paul, they have learned to be content in their allotted circumstances. (See Alma 29:3, 6; Philippians 4:11.)

Likewise, one deeply admires those wronged who, nevertheless, go on doing that which is right, refusing to become offended or bitter. Let others charge God foolishly (see Job 1:22); these faithful souls are magnanimous and forgiving, as was a generous Joseph in Egypt to his erring brothers: "Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life" (Genesis 45:6). Such Saints fashion forgiveness where others would revel in resentment!

One is humbled by the spiritual submissiveness of the dying young mother of twenty-six, understandably anguished at the prospect of not rearing her two children, one of whom she so recently made ready to lay down her life for, if necessary. The baby arrived safely, but, alas, the gallant mother could not tarry. With childlike faith this young sister touchingly inquired, "If I am to die, then how can I help my husband and my parents as they watch me die?" Surely she (and others similarly situated) faithfully conforms to King Benjamin's portrait of a Saint as one being "willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him, even as a child doth submit to his father" (Mosiah 3:19).

Let others falter

Such individuals give to us a continuing sermon in sainthood. The gospel light has “infused such joy” into their souls, that any cloud of darkness has been dispelled (Alma 19:6).

“By the patience of hope and the labor of love” these are finishing the work the Lord has given them to do. (See “Come, Let Us Anew,” *Hymns*, no. 17.)

Let the winds and the storms beat and pound upon such faithful Saints; they will overcome the world—not vice versa. Let others falter; these will not! Let others pout and doubt; these will not! Let some noisily mock the temple; these will quietly flock to the temple, to do the work of Him whose house it is!

God bless you faithful brothers and sisters for shining “as lights in the world” (Philippians 2:15), as beacons to dispel despair. To a world spiritually illiterate, you give great lessons in the

grammar of the gospel, including this one: death is a mere comma, not an exclamation point!

In the holy name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The Choir and congregation sang
“Hoe of Israel.”

President Benson

We welcome those who have just joined us on radio and television. We are gathered in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, in the first session of the 153rd Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Elder David B. Haight, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will now address us. He will be followed by Elder Howard W. Hunter, also a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder David B. Haight

Boyhood memories

I wish everyone could grow up in a small town. I have so many happy memories of my boyhood. During those delightful summer and winter evenings we created most of our own activities and amusement. They were wonderful days.

The most important building in our town in addition to the schoolhouse was our ward meetinghouse. The chapel had an imposing, two-tiered, elevated stand. The stand was quite large, and the first raised portion had a table for the ward clerk at one end and a piano at the other end, and right in the center of this elevated area was the sacrament table. On the highest level of the stand was the pulpit with its red plush cover and beautifully carved chairs with red plush seats for the bish-

opric or visiting authorities. On the rear wall of the chapel were two impressive oil paintings, one of the Kirtland Temple and the other of the Salt Lake Temple. Everyone in attendance had a clear view of the stately pulpit and, of course, the sacrament table.

Sacrament meetings were special

Sacrament meetings were very special occasions. The Lord instructed that “it is expedient that the church meet together often to partake of bread and wine in the remembrance of the Lord Jesus” (D&C 20:75). We of the Aaronic Priesthood knew it was special. We were well trained. We knew exactly what we should do. We had been taught at home and in our quorum meetings of the high honor placed on

us as holders of God's holy priesthood, which authorized us to perform sacred ordinances of the gospel.

As a deacon, I vividly recall how we admired the two priests seated up on the first level of the raised platform who would administer the blessing on the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Everyone in the meetinghouse could see them. I'm sure they felt the importance of the occasion. They were neatly dressed in their best clothes and well prepared.

The bishopric, seated in their special chairs, were on the stand above the priests. Everyone could see them. The priests acted and looked as dignified as the bishopric.

As deacons and teachers we sat on the first row, prepared to pass the sacrament. I recall how shiny the bread trays appeared, and the individual glass cups for the water sparkled. Everything about the sacrament table, including the linen, was immaculate and ready on time.

Sacrament hymns

Everyone was expected to sing the special sacrament hymn. Everyone did sing. Children were trained not only to be reverent but to know some of the words to the most familiar sacrament songs. I can still see Sister Ella Jack, who led the music, standing in full view between the sacrament table and piano, as she would pause and look over the congregation to be sure everyone had a songbook and was ready to sing. She gave special attention to see that the Aaronic Priesthood boys had songbooks. We would all sing. We were learning in our youth that to feel of the Spirit we must experience a change in our hearts, and to be in harmony on this sacred occasion required our singing the sacrament hymns. As we personally sang the words, our souls were better prepared to understand this sacred ordinance. At the Last Supper the early Apostles joined with the Savior in singing. Matthew records, "And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives" (Matthew 26:30).

And as we would sing in that sacrament meeting . . .

In humility, our Savior,
Grant thy Spirit here, we pray;
As we bless the bread and water
In thy name, this holy day.
Let me not forget, O Savior,
Thou didst bleed and die for me
When thy heart was stilled and
broken
On the cross at Calvary.

Fill our hearts with sweet
forgiving;
Teach us tolerance and love;
Let our prayers find access to thee
In thy holy courts above.
Then, when we have proven
worthy
Of thy sacrifice divine,
Lord, let us regain thy presence;
Let thy glory round us shine.
(Hymns, no. 49.)

These words would be impressed upon our hearts because we had actually sung them. There comes to one's soul heavenly thoughts as he joins in heavenly expressions coupled with heavenly melody.

Preparation for sacrament service

After the sacrament song had been sung, the priests knelt on a little red velvet bench as they offered the blessing on the bread and the water. We didn't have printed cards, but the twentieth section of the Doctrine and Covenants was open if needed. There were no microphones or speakers. The priests were taught to read slowly and distinctly and to enunciate clearly that everyone might hear and understand the words of this sacred prayer, every word of which was given to us by the Savior Himself.

Our quorum advisers schooled us in our priesthood meeting on the sacredness of the ordinance of the sacrament—how our thoughts should be about the Savior, of His sacrifice for

us—the importance of our dress and appearance, and of this quiet opportunity to resolve in our own minds to do better in keeping all of the commandments. We carefully watched our own priests officiate in a sacred procedure somewhat similar to the very first such occasion and heard them recite a divinely directed blessing upon the bread and water in remembrance of the flesh and blood of our Savior. As the priest publicly addresses our Eternal Father in Heaven, he might, if spiritually in tune, visualize in his mind a loving Heavenly Father listening to his humble plea,

“O God, the Eternal Father, we ask thee in the name of thy Son, Jesus Christ, to bless and sanctify this bread to the souls of all those who partake of it, that they may eat in remembrance of the body of thy Son, and witness unto thee, O God, the Eternal Father, that they are willing to take upon them the name of thy Son, and always remember him and keep his commandments which he has given them; that they may always have his Spirit to be with them” (D&C 20:77).

Lord's Supper introduced by the Savior

I wish the Aaronic Priesthood boys throughout the Church could have the same opportunity of hearing Elder Howard W. Hunter bless the sacrament as we have had in the temple. He is a special witness of Christ. As I have listened to him ask our Heavenly Father to bless the sacrament, I have felt of the deep spirituality in his soul. Every word was clear and meaningful. He was not in a hurry, not rushed. He was the spokesman for all of the Apostles in addressing our Heavenly Father. Every word in the sacrament ordinance is vital. Everyone in the sacrament meeting should clearly hear each word and reflect upon the covenant just made and on their own personal worthiness.

The ordinance of the Lord's Supper was introduced by the Savior Him-

self as recorded by the Gospel writers. Elder James E. Talmage comments:

“While Jesus with the Twelve still sat at table, He took a loaf or cake of bread, and having reverently given thanks and by blessing sanctified it, He gave a portion to each of the apostles, saying: ‘Take, eat; this is my body.’ . . . Then, taking a cup of wine, He gave thanks and blessed it, and gave it unto them with the command: ‘Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. . . .’ In this simple but impressive manner was instituted the ordinance, since known as the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The bread and wine, duly consecrated by prayer, become emblems of the Lord's body and blood, to be eaten and drunk reverently, and in remembrance of Him” (*Jesus the Christ*, 3rd ed. [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saint, 1916], pp. 596–97).

This holy ordinance was later taught by the Savior to the Nephites on the Western Hemisphere. After teaching and healing their sick, “Jesus commanded his disciples that they should bring forth some bread and wine unto him. . . .

“He took of the bread and brake and blessed it; and he gave unto the disciples and commanded that they should eat.

“And when they had eaten . . . , he commanded that they should give unto the multitude” (3 Nephi 18:1, 3–4).

The Savior instructed, “Give it unto the people of my church, unto all those who shall believe and be baptized in my name.

“And this shall ye always observe to do, even as I have done, even as I have broken bread and blessed it and given it unto you. . . .

“And this shall ye always do to those who repent and are baptized in my name; and ye shall do it in remembrance of my blood, which I have shed for you, that ye may witness unto the Father that ye do always remember

me. And if ye do always remember me ye shall have my Spirit to be with you.

"And I give unto you a commandment that ye shall do these things. And if ye shall always do these things blessed are ye, for ye are built upon my rock" (3 Nephi 18:5-6, 11-12).

Opportunity for spiritual growth

The weekly opportunity of partaking of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper is one of the most sacred ordinances of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and is further indication of His love for all of us. Associated with the partaking of the sacrament are principles that are fundamental to man's advancement and exaltation in the kingdom of God and the shaping of one's spiritual character. We should reflect in our own weekday conduct the spiritual renewal and commitments made on Sunday. We may fail to recognize the deep spiritual significance this ordinance offers to each of us personally. Is it possible that a casual attitude on our part of routine formality of this sacred occasion might deaden our opportunity for spiritual growth?

We all have regrets for words or deeds or thoughts from Sabbath to Sabbath that we would like to erase from our souls. Perhaps we have erred against someone or injured them; or, if there is ill feeling in our heart, we should repent, obtain forgiveness from those affected or transgressed against, then humbly, with a contrite spirit, prepare ourselves to be worthy to partake of the sacrament. If we have sincerely repented, we can be forgiven, and spiritual healing can come to our souls. You and I have felt it.

By revelation the Lord instructed that "the members shall manifest before the church, and also before the elders, by a godly walk and conversation, that they are worthy . . . walking in holiness before the Lord" (D&C 20:69).

The Savior also taught: "Ye shall not suffer any one knowingly to partake of my flesh and blood unworthily" (3 Nephi 18:28).

Some years ago Elder Melvin J. Ballard wrote:

"I am a witness that there is a spirit attending the administration of the sacrament that warms the soul from head to foot; you feel the wounds of the spirit being healed, and the load being lifted. Comfort and happiness come to the soul that is worthy and truly desirous of partaking of this spiritual food" (*Crusader for Righteousness* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966], p. 133).

During the administration and passing of the sacrament those present have the opportunity to think of the precious gifts available through His sacrifice for each of us, for the sacrament is blessed and sanctified that each may partake of it in remembrance of the Son of God. (See D&C 20:77.)

Commit to keep the commandments

Usually once a week, for a little more than an hour, we have the opportunity to attend sacrament meeting and reflect on the life of our Savior; to recall with deep gratitude and reverence His life of purity, kindness, and love; to reflect upon the great atoning sacrifice; and to partake of the broken bread, symbolic of His torn flesh, and drink of the cup, symbolic of His blood that was shed on the cross.

The Savior taught the Nephites that "I came into the world to do the will of my Father, because my Father sent me.

"And my Father sent me that I might be lifted up upon the cross; . . . that I might draw all men unto me" (3 Nephi 27:13-14).

As we partake of the sacrament and reflect upon His sacrifice for each of us, we make a solemn commitment to keep the commandments which He has given us, that by so doing we might always have His spirit to be with us. By partaking of the sacrament each

Sunday we receive the encouragement and strength to keep the commandments of God, to live uprightly, virtuously, and honestly. Did not Jesus Himself sum them all up as follows: "Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and will all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself" (Luke 10:27).

This is what every person who partakes of the sacrament is committed to do. Living God's commandments obligates a person to a life of goodness—goodness to society and a genuine helpfulness to humanity, and excluding from one's life hatred, enmity, immorality, selfishness, drunkenness, jealousy, and dishonesty.

May we experience the joy of regular attendance at sacrament meeting and feel the blessings of eternal progression in our personal lives through wholehearted compliance, in spirit and actions, with the sacred words of the sacrament.

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught: "Reading the experience of others, . . . can never give us a comprehensive view of our condition and true relation to God. Knowledge of these things can only be obtained by experi-

ence through the ordinances of God set forth for that purpose. Could you gaze into heaven five minutes, you would know more than you would by reading all that ever was written on the subject" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, comp. Joseph Fielding Smith [Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book Co.], 1938, p. 324).

Blessings of eternal progression

The sacrament is one ordinance that allows us to experience a personal relationship to God and enlarges our knowledge and understanding of Him and His Only Begotten Son.

Our personal reward for compliance with the covenants and obligations in the ordinance of the sacrament becomes the companionship of God's Holy Spirit. This is the light that leads to eternal life. The divine virtues associated with the partaking of the Lord's Supper are to keep His divine life ever in mind; to love the Lord with all our heart, might, mind, and strength; and to labor to bring to pass His ultimate purpose—the eternal life of man.

I bear you my humble testimony and witness that this is true, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

Elder Howard W. Hunter

Message to every living person

The message I bring to this conference today and to those listening to these proceedings is important to every living person. It is not a new message. If you are a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints you have heard it many times. If you are not a member, you may have heard the words before, but perhaps today, because of additional evidence, you may be more impressed by its truthfulness and more inclined to make it a motivating belief.

The message I speak of has been part of all the addresses you have heard previously today. It is simple and beautiful and magnificent. I may not present it in a perfect way, and there may be many who will not completely understand it. We may have difficulty responding to it in an appropriate manner, but the message itself has been referred to as the greatest, the most exciting, the most significant and important that we will ever hear. It has to do with the "good news"—the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Specifically, it is that Jesus of Nazareth, the same who was born of

Mary in Bethlehem some two thousand years ago, is the Savior of all mankind. We know, and testify to the world, that he lived a truly perfect and exemplary life, that he suffered for our sins in the Garden of Gethsemane, that he gave his life for us by being crucified on a cross, and that he was resurrected after three days—as he said he would be. The final part of this good news is that he will return at some future time to gather in his own.

This is also the message of the Apostle Paul, conveyed in his letter to the Saints at Corinth, that Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again on the third day. These are the words he wrote:

“Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand;

“By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.

“For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;

“And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures” (1 Corinthians 15:1–4).

“He is risen”

At this Easter season our thoughts turn to the events that comprise what is perhaps the most exciting part of the good news that we bear. I’m speaking of those events which followed the crucifixion of the Savior. The Gospel writers described the hurried burial of the Lord because of the onset of the Sabbath day; the early-morning discovery of the empty tomb by Mary and other faithful women; the announcement of the angel, “He is not here: for he is risen, as he said” (Matthew 28:6); the message, delivered by Mary to Peter and John, that the body had been removed from the sepulcher; the realization on the part of Peter and John that the tomb truly was empty;

and finally, the two brief conversations Mary had—first, with the two personages in white in the sepulcher, and second, with the one whom she thought was the caretaker of the garden, but soon realized when he spoke to her that he was in fact the Master himself.

“Other sheep I have”

These are events that confirm the messiahship of Jesus. It is to these events that Christians look for support of the hope that there is life after death. In our modern world, where life is so different and so far removed from the events of that first Easter morning, many have a difficult time believing and identifying with these things. For those who are struggling, we have additional good news. There is a way to know of a surety, and there are many evidences that can help those seeking truth to know and understand. May I briefly share with you, first, some of the evidences, and then, second, a course of action that, if followed, can bring about a knowledge of the truthfulness of these things.

While in Jerusalem, Jesus gave one of his most impressive discourses when he spoke about shepherds and sheep and referred to himself as the Good Shepherd who knows his sheep and is known by those of his fold. He said:

“I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.

“As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep.

“And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd” (John 10:14–16).

Who were these “other sheep” which were not of the Jewish fold in Palestine, who would hear the voice of the Lord and be brought into the light of the gospel with the rest of his sheep? This reference was to a remnant of the house of Joseph who were living on the

American continent, whose ancestors had left the Jerusalem area some six centuries prior to that time and traveled to the New World.

After his crucifixion and subsequent resurrection, the Lord did visit them, as he had said he would; and to those other sheep here in the Americas the resurrected Christ said:

"Ye are they of whom I said: Other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.

"And they understood me not, for they supposed it had been the Gentiles" (3 Nephi 15:21-22).

Another witness for Christ

Those who are familiar with the life and teachings of the Master from their knowledge of the books of the Bible will be interested to know there is also a record of his appearance to the people of the Western Hemisphere—the other sheep to whom he made reference. It is titled the Book of Mormon after the prophet who compiled and abridged the records of the peoples of the American continents. The Book of Mormon is another witness for Christ and records his teachings to the other flock in the New World. It is also a record of the historical events covering more than one thousand years of the travels and struggles of these people and the prophets who led and taught them.

We are already aware of the strength and the power of the many testimonies of the prophets who have lived in the world, as recorded in the Bible. Our good news is that the words of the prophets who lived in the New World give us not only additional insight regarding spiritual things, but also a confirming testimony that supports and is in harmony with what we already understand from our reading of the Bible.

Moroni's counsel

To those who may not be familiar with the Book of Mormon but are sincerely seeking truth, reading it will have a profound effect on your life. It will expand your knowledge of the way God deals with man and will give you a greater desire to live in harmony with his gospel teachings. It will also provide for you a powerful testimony of Jesus.

In answer to the questions, "How can I know of the truthfulness of these things?" and "How can I know of a surety that the Savior lives today?" Moroni, one of the great prophets in the Book of Mormon, has provided the answer. He gives us guidance regarding how one can determine the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon, and this same procedure will lead us into all truth and can surely assist one who desires to know about the reality of the resurrection of Jesus. He wrote this statement:

"And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost.

"And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things" (Moroni 10:4-5).

If you have a sincere desire to know, and if you are willing to live in accordance with all of the commandments He has given, this counsel of Moroni will result in a spiritual confirmation of gospel truths.

Soon the Savior will return

At this Easter season, I feel strongly the importance of my commission to testify of the reality of the Savior's resurrection. My brothers and sisters, there is a God in the heavens who loves and cares about you and me. We have a Father in Heaven, who sent

his Firstborn of spirit children, his Only Begotten in the flesh, to be an earthly example for us, to take upon himself the sins of the world, and subsequently to be crucified for the sins of the world and be resurrected. It was he who said:

"For behold, I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent;

"But if they would not repent they must suffer even as I;

"Which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit—and would that I might not drink the bitter cup, and shrink—

"Nevertheless, glory be to the Father, and I partook and finished my preparations unto the children of men" (D&C 19:16–19).

And again he said: "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

"And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?" (John 11:25–26).

It is truly a beautiful message—there will be life after death; we can return to live with our Father in Heaven once again, because of the sacrifice the Savior has made for us, and because of our own repentance and obedience to the commandments.

In the glorious dawn of Easter morning, when the thoughts of the Christian world are turned to the resurrection of Jesus for a few fleeting moments, let us express appreciation to our Heavenly Father for the great plan of salvation that has been provided for us. We should turn toward unselfishness and careful adherence to the principles of righteousness. In doing so, let us remember that the time of preparation is growing short, that soon the Savior will return. As the Apostle Paul has said: "For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come" (Hebrews 10:37).

That we may be found worthy at his coming is my prayer in his name, amen.

The Choir sang "All Glory, Laud and Honor" without further announcement.

President Benson

Elder Howard W. Hunter, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has spoken to us, following which the Tabernacle Choir sang "All Glory, Laud and Honor."

President Marion G. Romney has prepared a message to be delivered at this time and has requested that it be read by his son, Bishop George J. Romney.

President Marion G. Romney

(Read by his son, George J. Romney)

Unity, oneness, equality

One of the central themes of the gospel of Jesus Christ is unity. The scriptures teach that equality and oneness should prevail among members of the Church.

You will recall that on the night of the Last Supper, as the Savior met with

his Apostles, he prayed that they might be one with him, as he was one with the Father. He prayed not for them alone, "but for them also which [should] believe on [him] through their word;

"That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the

world may believe that thou hast sent me" (John 17:20-21).

Always the aim has been unity, oneness, and equality among the members of the Church of Christ. As an example, I call your attention to the record of Enoch, how he and his people reached a state of unity when the rest of the world was at war.

"And there went forth a curse upon all people that fought against God;

"And from that time forth there were wars and bloodshed among them; but the Lord came and dwelt with his people, and they dwelt in righteousness.

"The fear of the Lord was upon all nations, so great was the glory of the Lord, which was upon his people. And the Lord blessed the land. . . .

"And the Lord called his people Zion." Why? *"Because they were of one heart and one mind, and dwelt in righteousness; and there was no poor among them"* (Moses 7:15-18; italics added).

During his mortal ministry Jesus taught his disciples the same doctrine. After his ascension, "they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.

"Of one heart and of one soul"

"And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common" (Acts 4:31-32).

After the resurrected Savior's ministry among the Nephites, they "were all converted unto the Lord, upon all the face of the land, both Nephites and Lamanites, and there were no contentions and disputations among them, and every man did deal justly one with another.

"And they had all things common among them; therefore there were not rich and poor, bond and free, but they were all made free, and partakers of

the heavenly gift" (4 Nephi 2-3; italics added).

Out of harmony with leaders—an indefensible position

Today we are the Church of Christ, and the Lord expects us to come to this same unity. He has said to us: "Be one; and if ye are not one ye are not mine" (D&C 38:27).

Some members assume that one can be in full harmony with the spirit of the gospel, enjoy full fellowship in the Church, and at the same time be out of harmony with the leaders of the Church and the counsel and direction they give. Such a position is wholly inconsistent, because the guidance of this Church comes not alone from the written word but also from continuous revelation, and the Lord gives that revelation to the Church through his chosen prophet. It follows, therefore, that those who profess to accept the gospel and who at the same time criticize and refuse to follow the counsel of the prophet are assuming an indefensible position. Such a spirit leads to apostasy. It is not new. It was prevalent in the days of Jesus and in the days of the Prophet Joseph Smith.

It is good to remember the great lesson the Savior taught the Nephites on this subject as he began his ministry among them. Said he:

"There shall be no disputations among you, as there have hitherto been; neither shall there be disputations among you concerning the points of my doctrine, as there have hitherto been.

"For verily, verily I say unto you, he that hath the spirit of contention is not of me, but is of the devil, who is the father of contention, and he stirreth up the hearts of men to contend with anger, one with another" (3 Nephi 11:28-29).

Seek the Lord's will—then do it

There is but one way that we can be united, and that way is to seek the

Lord and his righteousness. (See 3 Nephi 13:33.) Unity comes by following the light from above. It does not come out of the confusions below. While men depend upon their own wisdom and walk in their own way, without the guidance of the Lord they cannot live in unity. Neither can they come to unity by following uninspired men.

The way to unity is for us to learn the will of the Lord and then to do it. Until this basic principle is understood and observed, there will be no unity and peace on the earth. The power of the Church for good in the world depends upon the extent to which we, the members thereof, observe this principle.

The major reason for the world's troubles today is that men are not seeking to know the will of the Lord and then to do it. Rather do they seek to solve their problems in their own wisdom and in their own way. The Lord, in the first section of the Doctrine and Covenants, which he revealed as the preface to the book of his commandments, pointed this out and marked it as one of the causes of the calamities which he foresaw coming upon the inhabitants of the earth. Listen to this ringing declaration:

"They have strayed from mine ordinances, and have broken mine everlasting covenant;

"They seek not the Lord to establish his righteousness, but every man walketh in his own way" (D&C 1:15-16).

Unity through scriptures and the prophet

Brethren and sisters, do not rely upon the counsel of men nor trust in the arm of flesh (see D&C 1:19), but seek the Lord to establish his righteousness (see D&C 1:16).

We of this Church can come to a unity and a oneness which will give us strength beyond anything we have yet enjoyed if we will obtain a sounder understanding of the principles of the

gospel and come to a unity in our interpretations of present world conditions and trends. This we can do by prayerful study of the Lord's word, including that given to us through the living prophet.

This is the way to come to a unity. If we will study the word of the Lord as it comes to us through the standard works and through the instructions of the living prophet and not harden our hearts, but humble ourselves and develop a real desire to understand its application to us in our own peculiar circumstances, and then ask the Lord in faith, believing that we shall receive (see D&C 18:18), all the while being diligent in keeping the commandments of the Lord, surely the path we should follow will be made known unto us, and we will be able to face the world as a solid unit.

Opportunity to rise heavenward

Surely we need this unity and this strength in this day in which we live. We have a great opportunity, the opportunity to rise heavenward, to gain the spirit of the gospel as we have never enjoyed it before. This we can do by developing among us that unity required by the laws of the celestial kingdom.

If, in the expediency of the moment, we set God aside to follow the teachings of men, we disown him.

Only a united people, keeping God's commands, can expect the protection which he alone can give when the floods come, and the rains descend, and the winds blow, and beat upon our house. (See Matthew 7:25.)

It is my conviction that, since we are engaged in the Lord's work, we can accomplish everything he requires us to do if we will but be united. That we may so be, I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

Bishop, would you carry to your father our deep appreciation for this

very timely message and convey to him our love and blessings?

The remarks of President Marion G. Romney, First Counselor in the First Presidency, have just been read by his son, Bishop George J. Romney.

We are grateful to the managers and operators of the many television and radio stations and cable systems for offering their facilities as a public service to bring the proceedings of this conference to a large audience throughout many areas of the world.

The Tabernacle Choir will now sing "Sweet Is the Work, My God, My

King." The benediction will then be given by Elder John H. Groberg, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, after which this conference will be adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

The Choir sang "Sweet Is the Work, My God, My King."

Elder John H. Groberg offered the benediction.

FIRST DAY AFTERNOON MEETING

SECOND SESSION

The second general session of the 153rd Annual General Conference began at 2:00 P. M. on Saturday, April 2, 1983. President Gordon B. Hinckley conducted.

Music for this session was provided by a Young Men-Young Women choir from the Ensign, Granite, Pioneer, Rose Park, Liberty, and Monument Park regions directed by Margaret C. Richards with Clay Christiansen at the organ.

At the beginning of the meeting, President Hinckley made the following remarks:

President Gordon B. Hinckley

President Spencer W. Kimball is watching the proceedings of this session on television. President Marion G. Romney is also excused and is participating with us by means of television. They have asked that I conduct this service.

We welcome all assembled in the Salt Lake Tabernacle on Temple Square in this, the second general session of the 153rd Annual General Con-

ference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We also welcome the many members and friends of the Church tuned to these proceedings by radio and television, or by direct wire or satellite transmission. There is an overflow congregation in the adjacent Assembly Hall where Elders J. Thomas Fyans and Rex D. Pinegar preside.

We are pleased to acknowledge especially our guests who are present this afternoon, along with general and local Church leaders and members from many parts of the world.

We express appreciation to the owners and operators of many radio and television stations and to the owners and operators of cable systems for their generous cooperation in making these proceedings available to members and friends of the Church in many countries.

These proceedings are also being carried to over five hundred and fifty stake centers by satellite transmission.

The music for this session will be provided by a Young Men-Young Women choir from the Ensign, Granite, Pioneer, Rose Park, Liberty, and Monument Park regions under the di-

rection of Margaret C. Richards, with Clay Christiansen at the organ.

We will open this service with the choir singing "There Is a Green Hill Far Away." The invocation will be offered by Elder William Grant Bangerter, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The choir sang "There Is a Green Hill Far Away."

The invocation was offered by Elder William Grant Bangerter.

President Hinckley

The choir will now sing "Come, Ye Children of the Lord."

The choir sang "Come, Ye Children of the Lord."

President Hinckley

Brother Wilford G. Edling will now read the auditor's report, following which Brother Francis M. Gibbons will present the statistical report of the Church for the year 1982.

Auditor's Report 1982

Wilford G. Edling

We have reviewed the annual financial report of the Church as of 31 December 1982 and operations for the year then ended. The financial statements and operations reviewed by the committee include the general funds of the Church and of other controlled organizations, the accounts of which are maintained by the Finance and Records Department of the Church. We have also examined the budgeting, accounting, and auditing procedures employed and the manner in which funds are received and expenditures are controlled. We determined that expenditures of general Church funds were authorized by the First Presidency and by budgetary procedures. The budget is authorized by the Council on Disposition of Tithes, comprised of the First Presidency, the Council of the Twelve, and the Presiding Bishopric. The Budget and Appropriations Committee, in weekly meetings, administers the expenditure of funds under the budget.

Modern accounting technology and equipment are employed by the Finance and Records and other depart-

ments in keeping abreast of rapid Church expansion and changing methods of electronic data processing.

The Auditing Department, which is independent of all other departments, functions in the threefold capacity of performing financial audits, operational audits, and audits of computer systems employed by the Church. These services are conducted on a continuous basis and include all Church departments, other Church-controlled organizations (the accounts of which are maintained in the Finance and Records Department), and worldwide operations, including missions, financial centers, and departmental activities conducted in foreign countries. The extent and scope of the Auditing Department in safeguarding the resources of the Church are increasing commensurate with the growth and widening activities of the Church. The audit of local funds of wards and stakes is assigned to stake auditors. Incorporated businesses owned or controlled by the Church, for which accounts are not maintained in the Finance and Records Department, are audited by professional auditing firms or by governmental regulatory agencies.

Based on our review of the annual financial report and other accounting data, and our study of the accounting and auditing methods by which financial operations are controlled, together with continuing discussions with personnel of the Finance and Records Department, the Auditing Department, and Church legal representatives, we are of the opinion that the general funds of the Church received and expended during the year 1982 have been

properly accounted for in accordance with the established procedures outlined herein.

Respectfully submitted,
Church Audit Committee
Wilford G. Edling
David M. Kennedy
Warren E. Pugh
Merrill J. Bateman
Ted E. Davis

Statistical Report 1982

Francis M. Gibbons

For the information of the members of the Church, the First Presidency has issued the following statistical report concerning the growth and status of the Church as of 31 December 1982. (Membership figures include estimates based on 1982 reports available prior to conference.)

Church Units

Number of stakes	1,392
Number of districts	336
Number of missions	180
Number of wards	8,888
Number of branches	
in stakes	2,699
Number of branches	
in missions	2,029
(These statistics reflect an increase of 71 stakes and 523 wards and branches during 1982.)	
Number of sovereign countries with organized wards or branches	89
Number of territories, colonies, and possessions with organized wards or branches	16

Church Membership

Total membership at the close of 1982	5,165,000
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Church Growth during 1982

Increase in children	
of record	124,000
Children of record	
baptized	67,000
Converts baptized	207,000

Social Statistics

Birthrate per thousand	28.1
Number of persons married	
per thousand	12.2
Death rate per thousand	3.9

Priesthood

Deacons	227,000
Teachers	168,000
Priests	325,000
Elders	436,000
Seventies	32,000
High priests	180,000

Missionaries

Full-time missionaries	26,300
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Genealogical

Names cleared in 1982 for temple endowments	2,462,700
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Temples

Number of endowments performed during 1982	
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For the living	48,800
For the dead	4,418,000
Temples in operation	19
Temples planned or under construction	22
Temples closed during the year	1

Church Educational System

Total enrollment during 1981-82 school year:	
Seminaries and Institutes ..	320,500
Church schools, colleges, universities	70,100

Welfare Services

Persons assisted by LDS Social Services	83,700
Persons placed in gainful employment	22,300
Man-days of labor donated to welfare services	393,500
Commodities distributed from storehouses in pounds	21,099,000

Prominent Members Who Passed Away Since Last April

President N. Eldon Tanner, First Counselor in the First Presidency; Elder LeGrand Richards, member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles;

John G. Lahaderne, president of the Italy Catania Mission; Charles R. Hansen, president of the California Oakland Mission; Terry Lavelle Crapo, Regional Representative; Lavere Arnold Ricks, Regional Representative; James David King, president of the Paradise Valley Arizona Stake; J. Spencer Cornwall, former conductor of the Tabernacle Choir; Bertha Reeder Richards, former general president of the Young Women's MIA from 1948 to 1961; Percy K. Fetzner, patriarch and former temple, stake, and mission president; Monte L. Bean, prominent Church leader and philanthropist; Dr. Albert Ray Olpin, former president of the University of Utah; Clare Middlemiss, personal secretary to President David O. McKay for thirty-five years; W. Creed Haymond, noted athlete and Church leader; Dr. Barney Clark, recipient of the first artificial heart.

President Hinckley

Elder Bruce R. McConkie, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will be our first speaker. He will be followed by Elder Royden G. Derrick, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie

I shall tell you how the keys of the kingdom operate, including from whence they came, where they now vest, and what their future is.

The divine account begins in the spring of 1829. It is the ides of the memorable month of May. The Lord's prophet is now in the twenty-fourth year of his mortal probation. He is dictating holy scripture to his amanuensis. The holy word speaks of baptism, without which a man can neither see nor enter the kingdom of heaven.

Baptism

The Spirit of the Lord rests upon the seer and upon his scribe. They desire baptism as starving souls cry out for food. A divine Providence guides them to a secluded place on the banks of the Susquehanna River near Harmony, Pennsylvania. There they pour out their souls to that God who commanded his own stainless Son to be baptized as a pattern for all men.

Then comes the miracle. The heavens are rent. An angel comes down from celestial heights to com-

mune with his fellow servants in mortality.

It is the resurrected John, whom Antipas beheaded more than 1800 years before in the foul dungeons of Machaerus.

It is that John, the only child of a priestly Zacharias and a sainted Elisabeth, who had himself been ordained by an angel, when but eight days of age, to overthrow the kingdom of the Jews.

It is that John to whom the Judean hosts came at Bethabara, seeking the cleansing power of his baptism. Then it was that the Beloved Baptist, "to fulfil all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15), immersed the very Son of God himself in the murky waters of a miserable Palestinian river.

It is that John for whom the heavens opened and who saw the Holy Ghost descend in bodily form, in quiet serenity like a dove, and rest upon the One of whom the Divine Voice then said: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17).

Aaronic Priesthood

Now in resurrected glory, speaking in the name of that Messiah for whom he had died a martyr's death, he confers upon his mortal friends the Priesthood of Aaron and the keys of the ministering of angels and of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins. (See D&C 13.)

Now, for the first time in nearly 1700 years, there are mortal men on earth who can stand in the place of the Lord Jesus in ministering for the salvation of men. The hour is at hand when the gloom of sullen darkness will be pierced and the light of heaven again shine forth on our benighted planet.

Melchizedek Priesthood

But this is only the beginning of the grand design. Messengers come again from the realms of light and glory. Peter, James, and John, who

held in their day that priesthood and those keys which always appertain to the Presidency of the earthly kingdom, come to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery.

These ancient Apostles, the friends and confidants of the Lord Jesus in mortality; these saintly souls who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead; these living witnesses of the One who died that all might live—then do a wondrous thing.

They confer upon the modern prophet and his associate the priesthood which is after the order of the Son of God, who abideth a priest forever. This Priesthood of Melchizedek is the highest and holiest order given to mortals now or ever. It includes now, and has always included, the power and authority of the holy apostleship.

Keys of the kingdom

With it the struggling mortals who will soon, by divine command, organize anew the Church and kingdom of God on earth, receive certain keys of almost infinite import.

They receive the keys of the kingdom by virtue of which they are empowered to organize, preside over, govern, and regulate the kingdom of God on earth, which is The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

They also receive the keys of the dispensation of the fulness of times, that glorious age of restoration and refreshment in which God designs to gather all things in one in Christ; that age of revelation and gifts and miracles in which he will bring to pass the restitution of all things spoken by the mouths of all the holy prophets since the world began. (See D&C 27:12-13; 81:2.)

Being thus commissioned, and having thus the gospel of salvation, mortal men can set up anew God's kingdom on earth and can preach again the gospel in all the world and to every people. The kingdom is then established on the sixth day of April in 1830, since which time every faithful

member has devoted his time, talents, and means to spread the truth to our Father's other children.

But even this is not all. Yet other keys must be forthcoming. On a wondrous day in April of 1836, Moses and Elijah and Elias each come, bringing from their dispensations the keys and powers they had exercised as mortals. It is a day akin to that wondrous day 1800 years before on the Mount of Transfiguration. (See Matthew 17:1-13.)

Keys of gathering

Then it was, on the snowy mountain heights, after the Father had spoken from the cloud, that Moses and Elijah, both taken to heaven without tasting death, had come in their corporeal bodies to a temple not made with hands, and given for that day and time their keys and powers to Peter, James, and John.

And so it is now with those same ancient worthies. They come again in our day. This time, in a temple built by the tithing and the sacrifice of the Saints, those same ancient prophets, now ministering in resurrected glory, restore their keys and powers.

Moses, who in the majesty of the Melchizedek Priesthood led enslaved Israel out of Egyptian bondage into their promised Palestine, brings back those very keys. These keys empower mortals to gather the lost sheep of Israel from the Egypt of the world, and bring them to their promised Zion, where the scales of enslaving darkness will drop from their eyes.

These keys empower those who hold them to lead all Israel, the ten tribes included, from all the nations of the earth, coming as the prophetic word affirms, one by one and two by two, to the mountains of the Lord's houses, there to be endowed with power from on high.

Gospel of Abraham

The man Elias brings back "the gospel of Abraham," the great Abrahamic covenant whereby the faithful receive promises of eternal increase, promises that through celestial marriage their eternal posterity shall be as numerous as the sands upon the seashore or as the stars in heaven for multitude. Elias gives the promise—received of old by Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—that in modern men and in their seed all generations shall be blessed. And we are now offering the blessings of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to all who will receive them.

Elijah brings back the keys of the sealing power, the power that enables men now living, as it was with Peter of old, to bind on the earth below and have their acts sealed everlastingly in the heavens above. (See D&C 110:11-16.)

Because Elijah came, the baptisms we perform on earth will have efficacy, virtue, and force in eternity. In literal reality they give us membership in the earthly kingdom which is the Church, and in the heavenly kingdom which is the celestial realm where God and Christ are.

And so, in process of time, there is "a whole and complete and perfect union, and welding together of dispensations, and keys, and powers, and glories . . . from the days of Adam even to the present time" (D&C 128:18).

In the meridian of time Jesus ordained the Twelve in the coasts of Capernaum; he gave the keys of the kingdom to Peter, James, and John on the holy mount; and later he gave these same keys to all of the Twelve. (See Matthew 18:18.)

In our dispensation the Melchizedek Priesthood came in 1829; men were ordained to the holy apostleship in February of 1835; various keys were given at divers times, chiefly on April 3, 1836; and this continued until all the rivers of the past had flown into the ocean of the present, and mortal

men possessed all of the keys and powers ever vested in men in any age from Adam to the present.

All keys and powers given to the Twelve

By way of climax, all of the keys of the kingdom are given to the Twelve in the winter of 1844. They then receive what the revelations call the fulness of the priesthood, together with the power to confer that eternal fulness upon others.

After they are thus endowed and empowered, the Prophet says to the Twelve: "I have sealed upon your heads all the keys of the kingdom of God. I have sealed upon you every key, power, [and] principle that the God of heaven has revealed to me. Now, no matter where I may go or what I may do, the kingdom rests upon you. But, ye apostles of the Lamb of God, my brethren, upon your shoulders this kingdom rests; now you have got to round up your shoulders and bear off the kingdom. If you do not do it you will be damned." (See the *Discourses of Wilford Woodruff*, sel. G. Homer Durham [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1946], p. 72.)

And thus is fulfilled the divine word in which the Lord had said aforetime to the Twelve: "For unto you, the Twelve, and those, the First Presidency, who are appointed with you to be your counselors and your leaders, is the power of this priesthood given, for the last days and for the last time, in the which is the dispensation of the fulness of times.

"Which power you hold, in connection with all those who have received a dispensation at any time from the beginning of the creation;

"For verily I say unto you, the keys of the dispensation, which ye have received, have come down from the fathers, and last of all, being sent down from heaven unto you" (D&C 112:30-32).

Keys exercised in fulness by only one man at a time

And thus also is established the Lord's system for succession in the Presidency. The keys of the kingdom of God—the right and power of eternal presidency by which the earthly kingdom is governed—these keys, having first been revealed from heaven, are given by the spirit of revelation to each man who is both ordained an Apostle and set apart as a member of the Council of the Twelve.

But since keys are the right of presidency, they can only be exercised in their fulness by one man on earth at a time. He is always the senior Apostle, the presiding Apostle, the presiding high priest, the presiding elder. He alone can give direction to all others, direction from which none is exempt.

Thus, the keys, though vested in all of the Twelve, are used by any one of them to a limited degree only, unless and until one of them attains that seniority which makes him the Lord's anointed on earth.

Divine succession until Christ comes again

It follows that when Joseph Smith—sent to a martyr's death by evil and murderous men—gasps his last breath, Brigham Young, being the next senior officer in the earthly kingdom, automatically becomes its presiding officer.

The next breath drawn by Brother Brigham is the breath of power filling the lungs of the Lord's previously anointed servant. There is not so long as the twinkling of an eye when the Church is without a presiding officer.

When President Kimball is called home to report the labors of an oh, so grand and successful ministry, the keys will pass in an instant suddenly to another Apostle of the Lord's own choosing. And thus this system of divine succession will continue until the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ in the

clouds of glory to reign personally upon the earth.

We need not fear for the future. This is the Lord's work; it is his kingdom; and he governs its affairs as he chooses. The keys, having been committed to man on earth, are now vested in those of his own choosing.

And as the Lord lives, and as Christ is true, and as truth will prevail, I testify that this work shall roll forward until it fills the whole earth, and until the knowledge of God covers the earth as the waters cover the sea.

Now, this testimony I bear for myself and for all the faithful elders of the kingdom, and for all the sainted

sisters who stand so valiantly at their sides, and above all I do it in the sacred and holy name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Even so, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder Bruce R. McConkie, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just spoken to us.

We shall now hear from Elder Royden G. Derrick, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy. He will be followed by Elder Hartman Rector, Jr., a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Royden G. Derrick

Facts in the drama of life

William Shakespeare was insightful when he wrote: "All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players" (*As You Like It*, act 2, sc. 7, line 139). Let me set the stage for a drama that is not fiction, but is reality. The drama is founded upon certain facts.

It is a fact that God lives. It is a fact that Jesus Christ was and is a divine being. It is a fact that the Father and the Son appeared to Joseph Smith in the Sacred Grove. It is a fact that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God. It is a fact that God revealed his will through his prophets in biblical days, and that he does so today.

Script for the drama of life

The script for this drama was written before the world began. The script writer has revealed clues about future scenes to individuals who have shared them with all who would listen.

For example, twenty-six hundred years ago, one of the important characters in the drama was shown some scenes of "what shall be in the latter

days" (Daniel 2:28). Daniel the prophet was shown the interpretation of King Nebuchadnezzar's dream, from which he related, "And in the days of these kings," referring to the latter-day scenes, "shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever" (Daniel 2:44).

The scenes relating to these clues are now on stage, front-center.

Joseph Smith's scene

At fourteen and one-half years of age, Joseph Smith went into the woods and prayed to our Heavenly Father, wanting to know which church of all the churches was true. There appeared before him God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ. The Father said, "*This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!*" (Joseph Smith—History 1:17). Then Jesus Christ told that fourteen-year-old boy that the true church of God was not on the earth, and that he had been selected to be an instrument in the hands of God in restoring the church of Jesus Christ

and the true principles of Jesus Christ. In the scenes following, "the God of heaven set up a kingdom" about which Daniel the prophet said, "[it] shall never be destroyed."

Joseph Smith permitted manuscript pages of the translation of the Book of Mormon to fall into the hands of others, and they were lost. This was displeasing to the Lord, who said to him, "The works, and the designs, and the purposes of God cannot be frustrated, neither can they come to naught" (D&C 3:1).

"Remember. . . that it is not the work of God that is frustrated, but the work of men" (D&C 3:3).

"Behold, thou art Joseph, and thou wast chosen to do the work of the Lord, but because of transgression, if thou art not aware thou wilt fall" (D&C 3:9).

Had Joseph not measured up, the Lord would have made a change in the cast by appointing another to take his place. But he did measure up, as attested by further revelations from God which commended him for his faithfulness.

The Lord said that this kingdom, which would be established in the latter days, "shall never be destroyed." We needn't question whether this church that God has set up is going to fail. It will not! For God has so decreed!

Daniel further prophesied that "the kingdom shall not be left to other people" (Daniel 2:44). We cannot join any ecumenical movement, for if we do so, we will be required to compromise principles. We cannot do that, for the Lord has established the principles upon which his church is built, and we have no right to change them.

Eighteen months after the Church was organized, and following heavenly visitations during which the authority to act in the name of God was given to Joseph Smith, the Lord declared that "the keys of the kingdom of God are committed unto man on the earth," and that the kingdom "shall roll forth, until it has filled the whole earth" (D&C 65:2).

Jesus Christ is the star

Clues to other scenes in the drama have been given to other prophets such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and John the Revelator, as well as others from biblical history; and Nephi, Alma, Helaman, Mormon, Moroni, and others from Book of Mormon history.

The star of the cast is Jesus Christ, the Savior of mankind. Many events in his life were the fulfillment of scenes previously shown to former-day prophets. Tomorrow, we commemorate the most important scene of all—the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who suffered and died to atone for the sins of men and women.

Cast—"inviteth them all to come unto him"

The number of people in the cast is unlimited. "If ye have desires to serve God," the Lord said, "ye are called to the work" (D&C 4:3). To pass the screen test, one must repent, be baptized, and keep God's commandments. Anyone is welcome to participate, for the prophet Nephi said, "He inviteth them all to come unto him and partake of his goodness; and he denieth none that come unto him, black and white, bond and free, male and female; and he remembereth the heathen; and all are alike unto God, both Jew and Gentile" (2 Nephi 26:33).

The acceptance of the gospel of Jesus Christ is affected by attitude. William James, a famous author and psychologist, wrote, "The greatest discovery of my age is that men can change their circumstances by changing the attitude of their minds" (Richard L. Evans, *Richard Evan's Quote Book* [Salt Lake City: Publishers Press, 1971], p. 161).

In the book of Proverbs we read, "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Proverbs 23:7). Henry David Thoreau sustained that concept when he said that a man becomes what he thinks about all day long. (See *Familiar Quotations*, ed. John Bartlett, 14th

ed. [Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1968], p. 682.)

We have our agency. It is the decision of each of us as to the character we play in this drama—as to what kind of person we are or will become.

When President David O. McKay was a young missionary in Scotland, he was homesick, discouraged, and low in spirit. As he walked down the street with his companion, he noticed an inscription chiseled in a stone lintel of an unfinished building which read, "Whate'er Thou Art, Act Well Thy Part." From that moment, he began to act the part of a good missionary and became a great one. This was a learning experience that helped him in numerous important callings he received later in life. (See *Cherished Experiences from the Writings of President David O. McKay*, comp. Clare Middlemiss [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1955], p. 174.)

Strive to become like Christ

If we want to be a person of integrity, we act as if we have integrity and we will be a person of integrity. If we want to be a person of charity and love, we act as if we have that characteristic and we will be that person.

The Savior alluded to this principle when he asked, "What manner of men ought ye to be?" Then he answered his own question, "Even as I am" (3 Nephi 27:27).

We should strive to become like him by acting as he would act.

God does not select the type of life we live. We make that selection by what we think. If you want to play the part, just act the part. What role are you playing now? Are you a valiant supporter? Are you a half-hearted member lacking conviction? Are you a bystander? Or are you one who fights against the Church of God.

Valiance equals eternal family, priesthood leadership, missions

There is a reward for valiance in this drama of life. The Savior said, "And . . . you shall have eternal life, which gift is the greatest of all the gifts of God" (D&C 14:7). It is difficult to conceive of eternal life being a place of joy and happiness without those we love in this life. Based upon our valiance, our future life will include our wife or husband, our children, our parents—yes, our posterity as well as our progenitors.

What can I do for my children to help them qualify for eternal life? Several years ago, the Missionary Department made a professional survey to determine what happens to returned missionaries. The survey included those missionaries who had returned from one to ten years previous and was claimed to be accurate within 3 percent. It disclosed that their faithfulness was most exemplary and praiseworthy. It was a revealing report that was much more favorable than one could expect.

A few weeks ago, I visited a stake consisting of young families. I asked the priesthood leaders how many of them had filled a mission. I was surprised when every man raised his hand. The next week I visited a more mature stake which was one of the outstanding stakes of the Church, and asked the same question. Every man in the meeting, but two, raised his hand.

The conclusion? Not that every man has to be a returned missionary to be a priesthood leader, but that those who fulfill an honorable mission develop an understanding of the gospel and a self-discipline that results in dedication and commitment to what they know to be true.

We should organize our family plans to result in a mission for each of our sons, and temple marriage for each of our sons and daughters. Planning missions for our sons might begin at birth when we start their own missionary savings program which will assist significantly in their being financially,

morally, physically, and mentally prepared when they reach mission age. However, we should, above all else, teach our children "to pray, and to walk uprightly before the Lord" (D&C 68:28).

Preparations for Second Coming

What can I do for my progenitors to help them qualify for eternal life? I can help my parents and grandparents to understand the gospel, to be baptized, and to receive these saving ordinances in the temple of God. I can make certain that my deceased parents, grandparents, great-grandparents, and as far as I can go in my genealogical research, have received in person or vicariously the temple saving ordinances necessary for them to gain eternal life. By doing these things for our posterity and for our progenitors, a forever family can be established, resulting in a dynasty of righteous lives that will bring joy and happiness "in this world, and eternal life in the world to come, even immortal glory" (Moses 6:59).

The final scene of this great drama is near at hand. The kingdom of God is going forth preparatory to the second coming of Christ when the curtain will fall and the Savior will say to each of the valiant, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord" (Matthew 25:21). And thus the kingdom of God will continue forever through the eternities to come. As the prophet Daniel said, "And it shall stand forever" (Daniel 2:44), with you and I having received judgment and reward according to the role to which we have been faithful in this life—to which I testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

We have just listened to Elder Royden G. Derrick, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Hartman Rector, Jr., a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will now address us.

Elder Hartman Rector, Jr.

"Will a man rob God?" (Malachi 3:8). This must be one of the most pointed questions ever asked in the holy scriptures. The implications are that an affirmative answer would mean that those who rob God will be cursed by God and burned as stubble at the Lord's second coming. (See Malachi 3:9; 4:1.)

Tithing—critical judgment criterion

This query was made of ancient Israel through the prophet Malachi, but it didn't apply only to ancient Israel. It quite obviously applied to the Nephites and Lamanites on this continent, too, for the resurrected Lord repeated it to

them when he visited them in about A. D. 34. (See 3 Nephi 24:8–9.) I presume modern Israel is also included under the same injunction, for surely the Lord used almost the same words when he warned of the burning that would precede his second coming, and tithing seems to be the critical judgment criterion. (See D&C 64:23–24.)

On the other hand, those who do pay tithing (give the Lord *his* tenth) are promised that the windows of heaven will be opened to them and their blessings will exceed their ability to receive. (See Malachi 3:10.) Further, the Lord "will rebuke the devourer for [their] sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of [their] ground" (Malachi 3:11). This is a blessing of great magnitude.

Perfect timing

Obedience to the commandments of the Lord, including the important commandment of tithing, brings many blessings. We do not always know how the Lord will bless us. For example, possibly the following experience common to most of us may serve to illustrate.

Have you ever been following a slowpoke car that is doddering along with the driver looking at everything along the way, and you know that if he doesn't speed up you are never going to get through on that green light? But then he does speed up—just enough to get through on the yellow light—and you have to stop. This has a great tendency to test the patience. Sometimes we even start thinking rather derogatorily about him as he drives away. However, it just may be that the Lord is protecting us from an accident two miles down the road because we stopped at that light, even though we did it reluctantly. If you entertain these kinds of thoughts, it may have a tendency to make you thankful instead of irate or angry, which is much better for your digestion.

I had this principle vividly impressed upon me one day a long time ago. I was living back in Virginia at the time, and one beautiful fall day I drove out into the country to pick up some walnuts. There were sixteen Stop signs between my home and the very, very heavily wooded lane where I turned in to get those walnuts. I stopped fifteen times. The last Stop sign was way out in the country. I could see in both directions. There were no other cars in sight. I thought to myself, "Why should I stop? Stop signs are to protect people, but I am the only one around. So why stop?" *So I didn't!* I wasn't speeding. I just went through at the speed limit. When I reached the heavily wooded lane, I found I couldn't see around the corner. It's that way back there in Virginia. So I slowed down and turned in. Just as I did, there was another car coming out

of the lane, and because we couldn't see each other, we ran together at about five miles per hour. It wasn't a hard impact, and the cars weren't severely damaged. As I recall, it only cost me \$168 to replace my grill and headlights.

Now, that accident had to be perfectly timed. Of course, if I had stopped at the last Stop sign, it would never have happened. I said, "Lord, I get the message. You really didn't have to go this far, but I do understand." In fact, I stopped sixteen times on the way home with the front end of my car beat up.

Blessings from obedience

It does seem that the Lord requires obedience in order for us to receive his blessings, which include rebuking the devourer. "There is a law, irrevocably decreed in heaven before the foundations of this world, upon which *all* blessings are predicated." When we receive a blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated. (See D&C 130:20-21; italics added.) This could reach even to a Stop sign, too, I suppose.

"Let no man break the laws of the land," says the Lord. "For he that keepeth the laws of God hath no need to break the laws of the land" (D&C 58:21).

Malachi continues, "Neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field." (We will avoid waste.) "And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightful-some land, saith the Lord of hosts" (Malachi 3:11-12).

It is a fact that we even look better when we pay tithing. There is a happiness that comes into the heart of the tithe payer that even reflects in his countenance.

Then the Lord seems to lament somewhat: "Your words have been stout against me, saith the Lord. Yet ye say, What have we spoken so much against thee?" (When did we ever say anything against the Lord?)

The Lord answers, "Ye have said, It is vain to serve God: and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts?"

"And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered" (Malachi 3:13-15).

A record is kept

Did you ever look at the boat in the driveway of the nonmember next door and think: "He doesn't pay tithing, or perhaps attend church on Sunday. He gets to watch the Super Bowl and the World Series and so forth on Sunday. He doesn't seem to do any of the things I have to do, and yet he seems to be getting along as well as I am, maybe even better than I am." Did you ever have any such thoughts? Well, if so, I would imagine that is what the Lord is referring to in these passages. Then the Lord drops the bombshell:

"Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another." (Like we are doing now. Did you ever notice that those who love the Lord are always talking to each other? One meeting after another.) "And the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name" (Malachi 3:16 and 3 Nephi 24:16).

Ah! the light breaks. There is a record kept—and surely there is one. One group is receiving its reward now; the other is laying it up in heaven; and out of the books which are written and shall be written shall the dead be judged. (See Revelation 20:12.) Then the Lord gives his word, which he cannot break, for surely "I, the Lord, am bound *when ye do what I say*" (D&C 82:10; italics added). And here is the Lord's promise: "And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him" (Malachi

3:17). Surely, it is very difficult not to be partial to your own son who is working for you, if he does a good job. I presume there is nothing wrong in feeling that way about your own son. The Lord seems to think not.

The Lord continues: "Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not" (Malachi 3:18). This will be quite easy to tell by looking at the record.

Roots and branches

Now comes the crux of the whole matter of tithing: "For, behold, the day cometh [saith the Lord], that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be as stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch" (Malachi 4:1).

In other words, those who pay tithing will have roots and branches at the last day and those who do not will have neither roots nor branches. Now what are our roots? Alex Haley wrote a book about roots. Obviously our roots are our ancestors. And what are our branches? They are our children. Then those who walk in holiness before the Lord, which includes the payment of tithing, will have an eternal family at the last day. And those who do not pay tithing will have none.

Tithing is necessary in order to receive the blessings of the temple. If a man were to keep all of the Lord's commandments with the exception of tithing, he still could never be married for time and all eternity in the temple; thus, he would have neither roots nor branches at the last day.

Then this becomes really serious, since there is no exaltation without your family. Without tithing there is no exaltation. As we think about it, we know this is true.

Tithing—a principle of exaltation

Tithing, then, is one of the bedrock foundation principles of exaltation. And, as it turns out, when a man pays tithing, the Lord opens the windows of heaven and rebukes the devourer so that it doesn't cost him anything, but really puts him far more ahead than he ever could have been if he had not paid it. It is a principle of great promise and brings eternal joy and happiness.

Who, then, can afford not to give the Lord his tenth? Surely neither you nor I; which witness I bear. For surely the Lord God has spoken it. And in the words of King Benjamin, "He never doth vary from that which he hath said" (Mosiah 2:22). In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder Hartman Rector, Jr., a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has just spoken.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "Now Let Us Rejoice." We shall all stand for this. Then following the singing, Elder James M. Paramore, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will speak to us.

The choir and congregation sang "Now Let Us Rejoice."

President Hinckley

When you see a group like this, you never worry about the future of the Church.

We shall now hear from Elder James M. Paramore of the First Quorum of the Seventy, who will be followed by Elder Loren C. Dunn of that same quorum.

Elder James M. Paramore

Signs and silent voices

My beloved and wonderful brothers and sisters, I seek an interest in your faith and prayers these few minutes that I stand before you. A few years ago, just before our departure for a mission to Belgium, our family went on a vacation. Upon arriving at a motel, our children were out of their clothes and into swimming suits before we could unload the car. As I passed the swimming pool, the sign struck me forcefully: "Do Not Leave Children Unattended." Though I had read similar signs and ignored them many times before, I felt compelled to stay and watch my young children. (My wife wasn't very happy; she was unloading the car.) In minutes, one of my daughters was in deep water, and deep trouble, and struggling for help. I dove

into the pool, clothes and all, and with all the energy I had, I reached her just in time. I recognized that frantic yet unspoken call for help that day, and I will never forget it.

There are basic needs of people that are not always so obvious as this experience; but they are there, and their nearly inaudible voices are there if we can and will hear—signs and silent voices everywhere that say, "I feel that there is something, somewhere, that I need, that will give me peace, that will comfort me and let me know that my life has purpose and importance, that I belong."

Gospel, great influence

A few years ago a psychiatrist, Dr. Henry Link, after going through

years of study and thousands of cases, found—though he had not been a Christian—that the gospel of Jesus Christ was the single greatest influence to make people happier, healthier, and more successful. So impressed was he by what he learned that he became a devout follower of Jesus Christ and wrote a book entitled *The Return to Religion*. As I have thought about this, I think of the statement of the Savior: “By every word which proceeded forth out of the mouth of God, men began to exercise faith in Christ; and thus by faith, they did lay hold upon every good thing” (Moroni 7:25).

Brothers and sisters, it is by this knowledge from heaven contained in the restored gospel of Jesus Christ and our total, implicit faith and adherence to it that we meet the basic needs of people.

Everyone has need to belong

Everyone has a need to belong. A new little puppy at our home barked endlessly for the first week because it missed its mother, and when any one of us would pick it up, it felt secure and wanted, that it belonged—and it stopped barking.

As a fifth grader years ago, I felt a desperate need to belong; and just being on a baseball team with a uniform created that security, that belonging, for me. The gospel of Jesus Christ can answer this great need for every man, woman, and child upon this earth—for every family, every single person. Everyone who joins His church immediately belongs, no matter who he is or where he is. There is a brotherhood that goes beyond national and linguistic borders, and it ties all men together. The truths of the gospel, the brotherhood and the sisterhood of the gospel, and active participation in it, satisfies these longings and can overcome all barriers.

“No more strangers and foreigners”

I remember a story recounted during World War II, when a German Latter-day Saint soldier was struck by an American bullet and lay perilously ill. He told his leader, “Please take a white flag and go to the other side and see if there is a Mormon elder who could administer to me.” What a bizarre request in a war of two mortal enemies. But seeing his condition, and anxious to satisfy what appeared to be a last request, the leader took the white flag, went across the enemy line, and asked for a Mormon elder. One was found and he, with the German, crossed the enemy line, laid his hands upon that brother’s head, and commanded in the name of the Lord that he remain alive until help could be had. There is a sense of belonging that is fulfilled by the gospel of Jesus Christ—first to our Father in Heaven; then to our family, which can be an eternal unit; and then to members everywhere upon this earth.

A few years ago, a retired couple (the Krugers) moved West to spend their last years. They went by bus and stopped in Provo, Utah, for a while. They had no particular destination in mind, and they took a cab and rode around the Provo area. They liked what they saw and felt, and the very next day bought a home there. They came from a large city in the Midwest and, though they had lived in the same home for forty-two years, they knew nearly no one. When they moved into our ward area, it wasn’t hours until food, help, and friendship were offered. They could not believe what was happening. They now belonged to other warm, compassionate beings—beings who truly loved them and brought security, warmth, and the true love of Christ into their lives. They were never the same again. They belonged to a larger family and were truly happier than they had ever been in their lives.

The Apostle Paul, himself a convert to Christ and His truths, personally learned not only of the great eternal truths which edified his whole being and changed his life, but also that he belonged to the body of Christ—the people of the kingdom of God on earth who loved and served each other with an open heart and spirit because of the love they felt. Listen to his words as he described how it was: “Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God” (Ephesians 2:19).

Members say they have never been a stranger anywhere they have gone—Italy, Oslo, Mexico City, Portland—or Orem, Utah. They belonged the minute it was known they were members of the church of Jesus Christ. Everyone who lives upon this earth needs this feeling of acceptance, and the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and His church bring it about. Even though a member lives alone, he is never alone. He belongs; he contributes; he is never forgotten.

Recently, in Holland, the mission president was stricken with a massive heart attack and lay near death's door for a while. Though he was an American foreigner, so to speak, he belonged to the household of God, and literally thousands of people in Holland and other lands, and the Apostles of the Lord, knelt and prayed for his life—if it was the will of God that he should live. Think of it—and it happens hundreds of times every day upon this earth. He belonged to the family of God; he felt their fasting and prayers and love. And what about his wife? She belonged as she had never known possible. I was there. I was a witness, and there were so many calls from those who belong to the household of God that she actually became weary.

As the president improved and I left, my heart was so full. Yes, for the preservation of his life, but also for the privilege of belonging to the church of Jesus Christ, here upon the earth.

Be a light to others

In reality, in His church we are always home—home in the things we believe, the standards we hold dear, the spirit we need, and the help, security, and belonging that are there. As I speak these words, I think of the elders quorum in Geneva, Switzerland, that has undertaken the project of moving all ward members when they relocate within the ward, without any cost. (They can't even get away from us in a move!) Latter-day Saints everywhere open their hearts, their homes, their purses, their lives, in service and love to others. This is not done by constraint, but by the love and joy they feel from God and for each other. Indeed, this is the essence of the gospel as the Savior lived and taught it. Remember his words: “Be one; and if ye are not one ye are not mine” (D&C 38:27). “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me” (Matthew 25:40).

“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, . . . [and] goodness” (Galatians 5:22). Everyone who belongs to His church *wants* to reach out—not because he is directed in an institutional or organizational way—to serve, love, aid, succor, and care for others with kindness and genuine concern. In humble, selfless ways each of us can be a light to others who may secretly or silently be longing or even praying to find that sense of belonging. My brothers and sisters, this type of caring, of nurturing, can never be accomplished by mandate or calendar, but comes because one has within himself that sense of belonging—feels its power, joy, goodness, and becomes concerned about all of God's children.

I remember a few years ago an inactive member of the priesthood who, in a moment of prayer, interview, and invitation to serve, felt the love and real concern of his leaders and wept openly for the opportunity to mend his ways and belong to the spirit and the brotherhood he felt. We belong

to these truths, this brotherhood, and these promises—but also we belong to the organization of the church of Jesus Christ. We are really needed, and we learn in His service. We grow in compassion, in wisdom, in character, in appreciation, and in strength as we become “anxiously engaged in [His] cause” (D&C 58:27). We become more like Him. We begin—if we serve with purity of heart and selflessly—to learn the ways of the Lord. We become more responsive to the needs of others.

Reach out

Leaders, let us follow the counsel of Moroni, the prophet. He said: “And after they had been received unto baptism, . . . they were numbered among the people of the church of Christ; and their names were taken, that they might be remembered and nourished by the good word of God. . . . [And they did] speak one with another concerning the

welfare of their souls” (Moroni 6:4–5). Let us reach out to every member, that he might belong to the household of God.

And members, may we reach out with all the energy and love we have, first to help every member of our family, and then to help members—every one of them—and finally everyone everywhere, so that all might have the great privilege and honor and blessing of belonging to the kingdom of God. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Thank you, Brother James M. Paramore of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

We shall now hear from Elder Loren C. Dunn, also a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, and he will be followed by Elder Marvin J. Ashton, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder Loren C. Dunn

Uphold the prophet God sends

My brothers and sisters, I'm very grateful to be here this afternoon, and I want to begin my talk by bearing testimony to you of the truthfulness of this work. I know that God lives and that Jesus is the Christ and that this is their work. I know that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God, and that Spencer W. Kimball is a prophet of God today.

I would like to share an experience or two with you. When I was growing up, Heber J. Grant was the President of the Church. My father always prayed for President Grant. And he had great personal feeling for him because President Grant at one time was president of the Tooele Stake, and my father at that time was president of the Tooele Stake. President Grant became ill and passed away, and I can remember after the funeral kneeling in

family prayer as a young boy and hearing my father praying with the same love and devotion and feeling for the next prophet, the next President of the Church, George Albert Smith.

As a youth, I was surprised because I had never heard anybody pray for any prophet other than Heber J. Grant. And I felt almost cheated—like my father was turning away from a good friend. But as time went on, through that experience and other experiences, he taught me a very valuable lesson—you see, he had great love and appreciation for President Grant, and that would never change, but in his heart I realized that he had saved his greatest love and his greatest loyalty for his God, and whomever God would send he would sustain and uphold and pray for and embrace.

Lengthening our stride in Australia

Not very long ago, my family and I had the opportunity to preside over the Australia Sydney Mission. I had come out of the Missionary Department, and I suppose my missionary views were very conservative. At any rate, as we began our work in the Australia Sydney Mission, we had some modest, but good, successes, and I felt comfortable about what we were doing—until President Kimball spoke to us. In his own manner and in his own way, he said, “Brother Dunn, Loren, we must all lengthen our stride.” And I got the message.

The message was that although we had made progress, yet before the Lord and before the prophet, it wasn’t enough. We went back, we redoubled our efforts; we found increased growth, but also we found increased strength and new stakes evolved because of those efforts. I don’t think the progress was so much because of us, but because of our desire to follow the prophet.

Blessings of receiving a prophet

I was talking to a priesthood leader just last weekend. We had finished our Saturday night leadership meeting, which was on missionary work, and he said to me, “You know, you are really a missionary General Authority.” And I said, “No, I don’t consider myself a missionary General Authority. If I can be remembered for anything (and I hope that somehow,

somewhere I can), I would settle for that which my father taught me and for which I feel he was known, and that is one who is willing to give allegiance to and follow a prophet of God. And if that can be my lot, then I feel I will have accomplished the thing the Lord has sent me to do.”

It’s not the program, it’s not the activities, but in the final analysis it is our loyalty to him whom God has called and the offering of our prayers on his behalf.

There is a scripture that goes this way: “He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet’s reward” (Matthew 10:41). I have come to realize the literalness of that promise. I have seen those blessings in the life of my father because of his loyalty. I would like those blessings for my family and myself, and I would like to see those blessings in the life of every Latter-day Saint.

May I end where I began. God does live. Jesus is the Christ. Joseph Smith is a true prophet, and we are led by a prophet of God today. The prophet has my loyalty and he has my love, because how can I uphold the Lord unless I uphold him? In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder Loren C. Dunn, a member of the Quorum of the Seventy, has just spoken to us.

Elder Marvin J. Ashton of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will be our concluding speaker.

Elder Marvin J. Ashton

Straightway—without hesitation

A few weeks ago I was visiting in a faraway country with a discouraged missionary. When I asked, “How long has it been since you wrote a letter to your mother?” he said, “Oh, about

three or four weeks, I guess.” When I suggested he write her a letter straightway, he responded with, “What does *straightway* mean?”

Straightway is a power word. *Straightway* is an action word. It means immediately, without delay or

hesitation. It means at once. Also, it is associated with having no curve or turn—a straight course, track, or path. *Procrastination* would be the very opposite of *straightway*. To procrastinate is to put off intentionally and habitually something that should be done. Procrastination is unproductive delay. Someone has wisely said, “Procrastination is a silly thing, it only makes me sorrow; but I can change at any time—I think I will tomorrow!”

“Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers.

“And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.

“And they *straightway* left their nets, and followed him.

“And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them.

“And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him” (Matthew 4:18–22; italics added).

Make decisions, then act

My remarks today are going to be centered around this key word, *straightway*. “And they *straightway* left their nets, and followed him.” How descriptive, how powerful, how rewarding when properly applied in human conduct.

We invite all to serve the Savior and walk in His paths *straightway*. There is an urgency for all of us who have this knowledge of His divinity to act upon it without hesitation or delay. The time is now.

Joshua reminds us of the importance of making decisions promptly: “Choose you this day whom ye will serve; . . . but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord” (Joshua 24:15). Not tomorrow, not when we get ready, not when it is convenient—

but “this day,” *straightway*, choose whom you will serve. He who invites us to follow will always be out in front of us with His Spirit and influence setting the pace. He has charted and marked the course, opened the gates, and shown the way. He has invited us to come unto Him, and the best time to enjoy His companionship is *straightway*. We can best get on the course and stay on the course by doing as Jesus did—make a total commitment to do the will of His Father.

Taking the first step

To *straightway* follow our Savior requires effort on our part. No longer does He personally walk the earth with us, but He has not left us alone. His guidelines and commandments are always with us if we will study the scriptures. We must learn His will before we can do His will.

A prerequisite for “doing” is goal setting. Actions are preceded by thoughts and planning. All of us must take charge of our own lives. We must evaluate the choices that are open to us, and then we must act positively on our own decision. An old proverb states, “A journey of one thousand miles begins with the first step.”

The word *straightway* suggests the urgency to take that first step toward any worthy goal.

“If you will that I give unto you a place in the celestial world, you must prepare yourselves by doing the things which I have commanded you and required of you,” said the Lord (D&C 78:7). To take that first step may require great courage, but somehow possibilities and potential strengths begin to appear once the decision to act positively is made. Unsuspected courage and strength will be given to those who start forward in the right decision.

Peter, a lowly, rough fisherman, took that first step and *straightway* followed Jesus. Strength upon strength was added to him. He grew from the disciple who denied his Master thrice, to the man who could be intimidated by

no man. When he and John were set in the midst of "Annas the high priest, . . . and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kingdom of the high priest" (Acts 4:6), Peter boldly declared that salvation comes because of Christ.

"Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus" (Acts 4:13).

The high priest could have brought great harm to these brethren, but he only dared to command them "not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus."

"But Peter and John answered and said . . . , Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye" (Acts 4:18-19). In the face of threats, these Apostles were given added courage: "And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all" (Acts 4:33).

By taking that first step straightway, Peter learned to be a fisher of men. He identified his goals, and as he moved toward them, he grew in strength, power, and conviction.

"To every man is given a gift"

How wise and blessed we would be if we eliminated procrastination and made a decision to serve the Lord and accept His invitation to "Come, follow me" (Luke 18:22). Then when we have identified our goal, may we have the courage to act upon our decision, confident that added strength and power will be given according to our needs as we follow the Good Shepherd.

As we plan to follow the Savior straightway, Satan may try to dissuade us by making the task look impossible, by making us doubt our worthiness or ability. Each is different; each has his own strengths.

Peter and Andrew were fishermen. Hence, in speaking in terms of their trade, the Savior said, "I will make you fishers of men" (Matthew 4:19). To the carpenter, He would say, "I will make you builders of men." To the teachers, "I will make you teachers of men." No person has all the talents.

"For all have not every gift given unto them; for there are many gifts, and to every man is given a gift by the Spirit of God."

"To some is given one, and to some is given another, that all may be profited thereby" (D&C 46:11-12).

Don't procrastinate action

Wishing things were different in our lives, or waiting for a roadblock to be removed or an attitude altered, can cause us to mark time rather than to move forward straightway. William Shakespeare wrote, "Our doubts are traitors, And make us lose the good we oft might win By fearing to attempt" (*Measure for Measure*, act 1, sc. 4, lines 77-79).

Use your specific talents. Don't procrastinate action while wishing for missing abilities. To those who are inclined to respond with "Not now" or "Not yet" to the invitation to "come, follow me," may we suggest, with all the love and sincerity we possess, He wants you. He will welcome you straightway regardless of where you have been, where you are now, who you are, or what talents you possess or lack.

Some weeks ago following a stake conference meeting, a man who has been totally inactive for many years approached me with great hesitation and said, "I guess I really don't belong here. My life is a mess." To this I responded, "What difference does that make? Of course you belong here."

Be servants rather than critics

Those who continually prefer to stir up waters find that they create

only a whirlpool and are carried around in circles rather than progressing straightway.

Can we be servants of our Master rather than critics of those who are trying to serve Him? A servant will look for solutions to problems while procrastinators excuse their inactivity by concentrating on the futility of the problem.

Those whose goal it is to follow the Savior straightway not only look for answers to their own problems, but also help others find solutions to life's difficulties. They open their hearts and minds to those who are troubled, ignored, or weary.

Just by listening empathetically, we often can help others find their own solutions. Recently a stake president told me that one of the most sincere thank-yous he had ever received came from a young mother with two children who, under very difficult conditions, was trying diligently to succeed as a single parent. After a lengthy interview, her words of appreciation were simply, "Thank you for listening to me. I think I can face my problems much better now."

Our own progress can be enhanced if we can look for solutions instead of being critical of those around us and blaming external conditions for our lack of progress.

Can we be honest with ourselves and examine the reasons we are not following the Savior straightway? Are we being delayed by criticism of another person's actions or attitude toward us? Has our pride been hurt or our ego bruised? Have we jumped to conclusions without accurate facts?

The Savior admonished, "Have peace one with another" (Mark 9:50). Peace must first come from within. It flows from the individual to the home, to the community, to the nations, and to the world. This peace can only come as we resist the damaging pastime of passing judgment. In the scriptures we are warned to judge not, that we be not judged. (See 3 Nephi 14:1; Matthew 7:1.) Somehow there seems to be

something enticing and intriguing about being a self-appointed judge.

Put aside hurts and delays

Many years ago I heard a story which I've always remembered. Perhaps I heard it when I was running around as a young barefoot boy.

A poor, old French woman was walking along the banks of the Seine River. On her stooped shoulders was draped a threadbare shawl. Suddenly she stopped, leaned down, picked up something that sparkled brightly in the sunlight, and put it under her shawl. A policeman observed her actions and hurried over to her. In a very gruff voice he said, "Let me see what you are hiding under your shawl!" The old woman drew out from the folds in the shawl a broken piece of glass, saying, "It is only a sharp piece of broken glass. I picked it up so some barefoot boy might not step on it and cut his foot."

The policeman was doing his duty, but he was more than willing to convict the woman of a misdeed before he could learn that she had acted with the nobility of a caring soul.

Yes, erroneous judgments of the actions of our fellowmen may be responsible for our delay in straightway heeding the call of our Savior.

By pursuing the teachings of Jesus Christ and living gospel principles, we can put aside the hurts and delays that may have been caused by people around us.

Self-discipline and self-restraint

Finally, to move and act straightway in the right direction requires self-discipline and self-restraint.

Many live by the motto Play Now and Pay Later. Some think that if they wait long enough, their problems will go away. But they don't. They must be worked through. Before we can solve our problems and put our lives in order, we must accept full responsibility for our problems.

We often avoid taking action because we tell ourselves that our problem was caused by circumstances or people beyond our control. Therefore, we think we can abdicate our responsibility, and we find ourselves hoping that other people or a change of conditions will solve our difficulties. Rather, it is our responsibility to repent—to change, and to move forward without delay. “Do not procrastinate the day of your repentance” (Alma 34:33).

How comfortable some of us become as we nestle in the web of procrastination. It is a false haven of rest for those who are content to live without purpose, commitment, or self-discipline.

We must heed the words in Alma: “Behold, this life is the time for men to prepare to meet God; yea, behold the day of this life is the day for men to perform their labors” (Alma 34:32).

Avoid procrastination. We can say with great accuracy procrastination is an unwholesome blend of doubt and delay. Oft-used words of the Savior such as *ask, seek, knock, go, thrust*, are action words. He would have us use action as we teach and live His principles.

“Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:

“Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it” (Matthew 7:13–14).

Do not doubt your abilities. Do not delay your worthy impressions. With God’s help, you cannot fail. He will give you the courage to participate in meaningful change and purposeful living. We need to repent, straightway, and trust in His reality and capacity to assist us in knowing the abundant life. He will help us learn to be sensitive to our own needs and to those of others. Those who fear, procrastinate. Those who change for the better show progress straightway and become wiser

and stronger. We need to develop the courage to straightway take the first step. We need to remember that children learn to walk only because someone encourages them to take the first step.

Straightway embrace His truths

May we launch straightway toward setting goals that are gospel oriented, knowing that if we use the talents that are ours—that if we help others, strive for peace, avoid being overly sensitive or overly critical—strength upon strength will be added unto our own abilities and we will move straightway toward greater growth, happiness, and eternal joys. Our Master and Savior invites us to straightway embrace His truths and enjoy the warmth of His constant companionship.

A man must rise by his own efforts and walk by faith. One of our greatest resources for success and happiness is doing the right thing now. All of us as God’s children must be taught that meaningful growth must come from within and not from without. By so doing, we will walk in His paths, lift the arms of the weary and oppressed, give encouragement to our associates, develop individual initiative in governing ourselves, carry our crosses with dignity and purpose, and help all to become fishers of men straightway.

The gospel of Jesus Christ is true. Jesus Christ is our Redeemer and Savior. Happiness and eternal life are available to those who will follow Him straightway. To these truths I leave my witness and testimony in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

That was Elder Marvin J. Ashton of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, and he has been our concluding speaker.

We remind the brethren of the general priesthood meeting which will

convene here in the Tabernacle this evening at 6:00 P.M., instead of the usual time of 7:00 P.M. We re-emphasize that the meeting will begin at 6:00 P.M. The reason for the earlier hour is to make it more convenient for those in eastern time zones, so that the priesthood meeting will begin for them at eight o'clock and conclude at ten o'clock instead of starting at nine o'clock and concluding at eleven o'clock as it has done in the past. Many of them have long distances to travel from their stake centers at the conclusion of that meeting. Six o'clock tonight for that meeting.

The nationwide CBS Radio Tabernacle Choir broadcast tomorrow morning will be from 9:30 to 10:00 A.M. Those who desire to attend this broadcast here in the Tabernacle must be in their seats no later than 9:15 A.M.

The singing for this session has been furnished by a great group of young men and young women. They

are beautiful and they sing beautifully. We are grateful for your presence this afternoon and for the beautiful spirit your music has added to this meeting. This group probably will never have another opportunity to sing in the Tabernacle, and we are a little ahead of time today, so I am going to take the liberty of asking that they sing again "Come, Ye Children of the Lord." Then they will sing their regularly scheduled closing song, "With a Voice of Singing." Following the singing, the benediction will be offered by Elder Vaughn J. Featherstone, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The choir sang "Come, Ye Children of the Lord" and "With a Voice of Singing."

Elder Vaughn J. Featherstone offered the benediction.

GENERAL PRIESTHOOD MEETING

THIRD SESSION

The general priesthood meeting convened in the Tabernacle at 6:00 P.M. on Saturday, April 2, 1983.

President Gordon B. Hinckley, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted.

The music for this session was provided by the Ricks College men's choir from Rexburg, Idaho, directed by Richard Robison and Noel Brown with Roy M. Darley at the organ.

President Hinckley opened this session with the following remarks:

President Gordon B. Hinckley

Brethren, we welcome you to this great priesthood meeting of men and boys of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We very much re-

gret that President Kimball is not able to meet with us. He is watching the proceeding of this session on television in his apartment. President Romney will not be able to meet with us either because of some health problems. We very much regret their absence. President Kimball asked that we extend his love and best wishes to all of the brethren participating in this session.

These services are being relayed by closed-circuit transmission and will reach members of the priesthood gathered in the Assembly Hall, the Marriott Center on the BYU campus, and in approximately 1,388 locations in many countries around the world. Also, they are being carried to over five hundred and fifty stake centers by satellite transmission.

We extend our greetings and blessings to all the priesthood brethren wherever they may be.

We note that Elder G. Homer Durham and Bishop J. Richard Clarke are seated on the stand in the Assembly Hall, and Elders Carlos E. Asay and Angel Abrea preside at the BYU Marriott Center. We hope they were able to get there through the storm.

The singing during this session will be furnished by the Ricks College men's choir under the direction of Richard Robison and Noel Brown with Roy Darley at the organ.

We shall begin this service by the choir singing "See, the Mighty Angel Flying!" Following the singing, Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will offer the invocation.

The choir sang "See, the Mighty Angel Flying!"

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin offered the invocation.

President Hinckley

The choir will now favor us with "Come, Serve the Lord." Elder Dean L. Larsen, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will then address us.

The choir sang "Come, Serve the Lord."

President Hinckley

Elder Dean L. Larsen, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will be our first speaker this evening. He has been asked to speak about the importance of families and fathers in the lives of Aaronic Priesthood young men and young women. Elder Larsen will be followed by President Jeffrey R. Holland of Brigham Young University.

Elder Dean L. Larsen

Influence of the home

Tonight in this meeting of the priesthood, we will be talking about the importance of families. Other matters of importance will also be discussed, but special attention will be given to families. The more we learn about the power of the influence exerted in families, the more we can appreciate the counsel given to us by our leaders from the earliest days of the Church to make certain that the circumstances in our homes are what they should be. We have said much over the years about the responsibility of parents to provide a wholesome home life for their children. We will receive ad-

ditional encouragement of that kind tonight. It is vital that we do.

We have recently completed some very comprehensive studies that confirm the power of the influence that we work upon one another in our families and in our homes. The influence of the family has a greater effect upon what we think, how we feel, and what we do about our lives than all of the other sources of influence combined. The patterns we set in our homes and the values we develop there, whether they be good or bad, almost cannot be overcome.

All of us have a responsibility to contribute to the quality of our home life. Parents make a great contribution, but so do the children.

Challenge to young men

Tonight I would like to talk principally to the young men of the Aaronic Priesthood about the responsibility you have to live in such a way that you can be a good influence in your homes, whatever the conditions there may be, and so that you can qualify to do all that the Lord expects of you during your lifetime.

Young men, I do not believe that you are here upon the earth at this time by accident. I believe you qualified in the premortal life to come into mortality at a time when great things would be required of you. I believe you demonstrated before you came here that you were capable of being trusted under unusually difficult circumstances—that you could measure up to the most difficult challenges. Don't misunderstand me. I don't suggest that you are inherently better than or superior to any of the other generations that have come to the earth. You do not automatically qualify for any more blessings or advantages than anyone else who has lived since the earth was created. You can go astray, become involved in transgression, and incur the judgments of God as readily as any who have preceded you here. In fact, you live in an environment in which it is probably as easy to disqualify yourselves in this way as any generation has ever experienced. But God trusts that you will not. He relies upon you to keep yourselves eligible to accomplish the monumental tasks that he expects you to achieve.

Period of final great effort

You are growing to maturity in a period of the earth's history that all of the great prophets of all the ages have looked forward to with anticipation. It is a time of final preparation before the earth and its inhabitants undergo a remarkable transformation. It is properly referred to as the "fulness of times" (D&C 112:30). It is the period during which the Lord and his servants will

make the final great effort to take the message of truth to all the peoples of the earth and to reclaim the descendants of ancient Israel who have lost their true identity.

The prophet Zenos, whom Jacob quotes in the Book of Mormon, compares this effort to the work of the laborers who prune and nurture a vineyard and gather its fruit for the last time. Zenos likens the Savior to the master of the vineyard, who says to those who are his helpers, "Wherefore, let us go to and labor with our might this last time, for behold the end draweth nigh, and this is the last time that I shall prune my vineyard" (Jacob 5:62).

You have come to the earth when the foundation has been laid for this great work. The gospel has been restored for the last time. The Church has been established in almost every part of the world. The stage is set for the final dramatic scenes to be enacted. You will be the principal players. You are among the last laborers in the vineyard. This is the yoke that is set upon your necks. This is the service for which you are chosen.

Battleground for the souls of men

Let me now describe the setting within which you will perform your labors. The Savior himself said that conditions toward the end of this dispensation would very much resemble those that existed just before the Flood. "As the days of Noe were," he said, "so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Matthew 24:37).

Joel saw the period of time in which we live as a great battleground for the souls of men, "Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles [he said]; Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up:

"Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruninghooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong" (Joel 3:9-10).

Joel saw that this great battle would not be regarded in a casual way. It would be no time for weakness nor weaklings.

The Apostle Paul wrote to his young missionary companion, Timothy, "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come" (2 Timothy 3:1).

Not safe to move in direction of wicked world

The challenging conditions we find in the world today should be no surprise to us. As we approach the time of the Savior's return, wickedness will increase. There will be more temptations in our daily lives, and they will become more intense. It will become more acceptable in the world to break the laws of God or to disregard them altogether. The stigma attached to immoral, dishonest behavior will disappear.

In this difficult environment we will be expected to steer our own course in an upward direction. As President Kimball has warned us, it will neither be acceptable nor safe to remain on the plateaus where our present conduct has kept us. Abrupt downward forces, represented by increasing wickedness in the world, can only be offset by forces that move correspondingly upward. Our lives must be better than they have ever been before. This simply means that we will become increasingly different from those around us whose lives follow the world's way. It is not easy to be different. There are intense pressures that work against us. But we must clearly understand that it is not safe to move in the same direction the world is moving, even though we remain slightly behind the pace they set. Such a course will eventually lead us to the same problems and heartaches. It will not permit us to perform the work the Lord has chosen us to do. It would disqualify us from his blessing and his protecting care.

The Lord has said that the time will come when there will be "an entire separation of the righteous and the wicked" (D&C 63:54). Nephi, in the Book of Mormon, said, "For the time speedily cometh that the Lord God shall cause a great division among the people, and the wicked will he destroy" (2 Nephi 30:10).

Must qualify for blessings

As we consider these promises, we should not forget the warning given by the Lord to the Latter-day Saints. "Nevertheless, Zion shall escape if she observe to do all things whatsoever I have commanded her.

"But if she observe not to do whatsoever I have commanded her, I will visit her according to all her works, with sore affliction, with pestilence, with plague, with sword, with vengeance, with devouring fire" (D&C 97:25-26).

We must recognize from this warning that it is not enough to be a Latter-day Saint in name only. It is not enough to simply declare that we are a chosen people of the Lord. We must keep the trust he has given us. We must qualify for his blessing by the way we remain different from the world in our obedience to his laws. Otherwise, we have no promise, and our fate will be the fate of the world.

Avoid the worldly trends

One of the reasons I feel such a deep concern for you young men is that we see some evidences today of an inclination among our young people to follow the trends of the world. We do not always keep up with the pace-setters, but in some ways we follow not too far behind them. I know there are many who are exceptions to this pattern and who faithfully keep the commandments of God and whose lives remain pure and unspotted from the things of the world, even in the face of great temptation and challenge. (See D&C 59:9.) You who are faithful in

this way have our profound respect and our great confidence. You are living up to the trust the Lord has placed with you.

But there are too many whose lives are being contaminated by the worldly trends. This is not a light matter. The judgments of God will not be withheld from those who willfully, knowing who they are and what is expected of them, allow themselves to be drawn along the precarious paths of worldly conduct. To such as there are who are within the sound of my voice tonight, I say: Take the upward path. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galatians 6:7).

Willful move off proper course

Several years ago I expressed the following thoughts in an article that was printed in an issue of the *New Era* magazine. They are appropriate to my subject tonight.

"Not long ago I interviewed a young man who desired to fill a mission, but he had been guilty of some very serious transgressions during his teen years. He was a member of an active Latter-day Saint family, and he himself had been an actively participating member of the Church, even during the time of his transgressions. Ultimately he had gone to his bishop and confessed his wrongdoings. Now, for more than a year, his life had been free of the earlier difficulties, and he was anxious to serve a mission.

"As we talked about his situation and the decisions he had made earlier in his life that led to his questionable standing in the Church, he said, 'Oh, I knew that what I was doing was wrong, and I was sure that one day I would put things back in order and go on a mission.'

"While I was pleased with this young man's desire to reorder his life and serve the Lord as a missionary, I was troubled by the apparent premeditated, calculated way in which he had allowed himself to move off the proper

course to engage in some destructive, immoral behavior, and then, almost as if he were following a timetable set by himself, he had begun to reconstruct his resolve to be obedient.

Tendency to sample forbidden

"If my experience with this young man had been an isolated one, it would not be worthy of note here; unfortunately, however, it is not unique. There appears to be an increasing tendency and temptation for young people to sample the forbidden things of the world, not with the intent to embrace them permanently, but with the knowing decision to indulge in them momentarily as though they held a value of some kind too important or exciting to pass by. It is one of the great tests of our time.

"While many recover from these excursions into forbidden territory, an increasing number of tragedies are occurring that reach out to bring a blight and a despair to many lives and that have long-lasting consequences. There is no such thing as private sin. Although its commission can be calculated . . . , its effects cannot be regulated by the person guilty of the misbehavior. To believe otherwise is to become gullible to one of the most insidious lies ever perpetrated by the father of lies.

A plea for the here and now

"[Not long ago] I attended a graduation ceremony at a local high school. The students who had been invited to speak for their classmates expressed themselves in terms of the grand and noble challenges that lay before them as they stepped across the threshold into adult life. The adult speakers extolled the virtues and potential of today's youth and spoke of the horizons to be conquered in future years, the new scientific frontiers to be opened by members of the graduating class, the dread diseases for which cures would be found, and the break-

throughs in diplomacy and human relations that would bring lasting peace to the earth. It was a stimulating, inspiring service.

"As I listened to the impressive addresses on this occasion, I found myself framing in my own mind the things I would have liked to say to this group of young people. I knew that most of them were Latter-day Saints. I knew they came from families where high expectations were held for them, where there was a shared pride in their accomplishments. I also knew about the experiences some of these young people had planned for themselves in the hours and days immediately following the graduation service. I found myself wanting to plead with this graduating class, not about the glorious, obscure years of the dim future when they would hopefully accomplish so much for mankind, but about the here and now. I wanted to say to them, 'I am not so much concerned about what you do next year or in the next generation; I am worried about what you are going to do tonight and tomorrow when you have handed in your cap and gown. What have you planned? Where will you go? What will you do tonight?'"

"I know now, as I record these thoughts, that there were those in that graduating class, as well as some others in similar groups, who willfully, with calculated premeditation, placed themselves in circumstances following their graduation services where they dishonored themselves, their families, their Church, and their Heavenly Father. Their behavior was not intended to become a permanent fixture in their lives. It was done as a lark, a momentary thrill, a dare. But its cumulative effect is devastating. The reverberations will [affect] their lives, and the lives of those who loved and trusted them, in unfortunate and unforeseen ways for indefinite periods of time. Humanity will have slipped inexorably to a lower level. Some will never completely recover, and all mankind will

inevitably feel the loss" (*New Era*, June 1980, pp. 4-5).

Contribute to spiritual environment of your home

Young men, remember who you are. Remember the purpose for which you have come to the earth—the service you have been chosen to give. Stay true to the divine trust that our Heavenly Father and his Son, Jesus Christ, have placed upon you. You can contribute as much to the spiritual environment of your homes as any member of your family, and you have an obligation to do so. Study the scriptures and encourage the other members of your family to do so. Say your prayers and do all you can to influence other members of your family to pray. Pay your tithes. Obey the Word of Wisdom. Be chaste. You may have a greater influence than you have thought possible, if you will do your own part.

Remember these words of Edward W. Bok: "Once we are convinced . . . that we are put here for a purpose: that the seed of divine energy has been given us and that it is for us to cultivate it to its fullest bloom, the way will be shown us. It is our part to make the effort and to put the fullest force and integrity into that effort. It is the young man of little faith who says, 'I am nothing.' It is the young man of true conception who says, 'I am everything,' and then goes out to prove it."

Young men, let us prove by the way we live and serve that we are everything the Lord expects us to be, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder Dean L. Larsen, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has just addressed us.

President Jeffrey R. Holland and his son, Matthew Holland, will now share suggestions and experiences for a

successful father-son relationship. Matt, why don't you come right up

here so you can catch your father when he leans backwards.

President Jeffrey R. Holland

Brethren, it is impossible to express the overwhelming sense of responsibility I feel tonight. Like the mule who entered the Kentucky Derby, I know I probably shouldn't be here, but I surely like the company it lets me keep. Tonight I include in that special company my son Matt, whom I love with all my heart. I pray earnestly for the Spirit of the Lord to be with us in our assignment.

Companionship with son

Brethren, a recent study conducted by the Church has forcefully confirmed statistically what we have been told again and again. That is, if loving, inspired instruction and example are not provided at home, then our related efforts for success in and around Church programs are severely limited. It is increasingly clear that we must teach the gospel to our families personally, live those teachings in our homes, or run the risk of discovering too late that a Primary teacher or priesthood adviser or seminary instructor *could* not do for our children what we *would* not do for them.

May I offer just this much encouragement regarding such a great responsibility? What I cherish in my relationship with Matt is that he is, along with his mother and sister and brother, my closest, dearest friend. I would rather be here at this priesthood meeting tonight with my son than with any other male companion in this world. I love to be with him. We talk a lot. We laugh a lot. We play one-on-one basketball; we play tennis and racquetball, though I do refuse to play golf with him (that's a private joke). We discuss problems. I am the president of a small university, and he is the

president of a large high school class. We compare notes and offer suggestions and share each other's challenges. I pray for him and have cried with him, and I'm immensely proud of him. We've talked long into the night lying on his water bed, a twentieth-century aberration which I know, as part of the punishment of the last days, will one day burst and wash the Hollands helplessly into the streets of Provo (that's another private joke).

I feel I can talk to Matt about how he is enjoying seminary because I try to talk to him about all of his classes at school. We often imagine together what his mission will be like because he knows how much my mission meant to me. And he asks me about temple marriage because he knows I am absolutely crazy about his mother. He wants his future wife to be like her and for them to have what we have.

Never give up

Now, even as I speak, I know that there are fathers and sons in this meeting tonight who feel they do not have any portion of what is here described. I know there are fathers who would give virtually their very lives to be close again to a struggling son. I know there are sons in our meeting who wish their dads were at their side, tonight or any night. I have wondered how to speak on this assigned topic without sounding self-righteous on the one hand or offending already tender hearts on the other. In answer to that, I simply say to us all, young and old, never give up. Keep trying, keep reaching, keep talking, keep praying—but never give up. Above all, never pull away from each other.

*Saturday, April 2, 1983**First Day*

The whole load of bricks!

May I share a brief but painful moment from my own inadequate efforts as a father?

Early in our married life my young family and I were laboring through graduate school at a university in New England. Pat was the Relief Society president in our ward, and I was serving in our stake presidency. I was going to school full-time and teaching half-time. We had two small children then, with little money and lots of pressures. In fact, our life was about like yours.

One evening I came home from long hours at school, feeling the proverbial weight of the world on my shoulders. Everything seemed to be especially demanding and discouraging and dark. I wondered if the dawn would ever come. Then, as I walked into our small student apartment, there was an unusual silence in the room.

"What's the trouble?" I asked.

"Matthew has something he wants to tell you," Pat said.

"Matt, what do you have to tell me?" He was quietly playing with his toys in the corner of the room, trying very hard not to hear me. "Matt," I said a little louder, "do you have something to tell me?"

He stopped playing, but for a moment didn't look up. Then these two enormous, tear-filled brown eyes turned toward me, and with the pain only a five-year-old can know, he said, "I didn't mind Mommy tonight, and I spoke back to her." With that he burst into tears, and his entire little body shook with grief. A childish indiscretion had been noted, a painful confession had been offered, the growth of a five-year-old was continuing, and loving reconciliation could have been wonderfully underway.

Everything might have been just terrific—except for me. If you can imagine such an idiotic thing, I lost my temper. It wasn't that I lost it with Matt—it was with a hundred and one other things on my mind; but he didn't

know that, and I wasn't disciplined enough to admit it. He got the whole load of bricks.

I told him how disappointed I was and how much more I thought I could have expected from him. I sounded like the parental pygmy I was. Then I did what I had never done before in his life—I told him that he was to go straight to bed and that I would not be in to say his prayers with him or to tell him a bedtime story. Muffling his sobs, he obediently went to his bedside, where he knelt—alone—to say his prayers. Then he stained his little pillow with tears his father should have been wiping away.

If you think the silence upon my arrival was heavy, you should have felt it now. Pat did not say a word. She didn't have to. I felt terrible!

Never withhold affection or forgiveness

Later, as we knelt by our own bed, my feeble prayer for blessings upon my family fell back on my ears with a horrible, hollow ring. I wanted to get up off my knees right then and go to Matt and ask his forgiveness, but he was long since peacefully asleep.

My relief was not so soon coming; but finally I fell asleep and began to dream, which I seldom do. I dreamed Matt and I were packing two cars for a move. For some reason his mother and baby sister were not present. As we finished I turned to him and said, "Okay, Matt, you drive one car and I'll drive the other."

This five-year-old very obediently crawled up on the seat and tried to grasp the massive steering wheel. I walked over to the other car and started the motor. As I began to pull away, I looked to see how my son was doing. He was trying—oh, how he was trying. He tried to reach the pedals, but he couldn't. He was also turning knobs and pushing buttons, trying to start the motor. He could scarcely be seen over the dashboard, but there staring out at me again were those same immense,

tear-filled, beautiful brown eyes. As I pulled away, he cried out, "Daddy, don't leave me. I don't know how to do it. I am too little." And I drove away.

A short time later, driving down that desert road in my dream, I suddenly realized in one stark, horrifying moment what I had done. I slammed my car to a stop, threw open the door, and started to run as fast as I could. I left car, keys, belongings, and all—and I ran. The pavement was so hot it burned my feet, and tears blinded my straining effort to see this child somewhere on the horizon. I kept running, praying, pleading to be forgiven and to find my boy safe and secure.

As I rounded a curve nearly ready to drop from physical and emotional exhaustion, I saw the unfamiliar car I had left Matt to drive. It was pulled carefully off to the side of the road, and he was laughing and playing nearby. An older man was with him, playing and responding to his games. Matt saw me and cried out something like, "Hi, Dad. We're having fun." Obviously he had already forgiven and forgotten my terrible transgression against him.

But I dreaded the older man's gaze, which followed my every move. I tried to say "Thank you," but his eyes were filled with sorrow and disappointment. I muttered an awkward apology and the stranger said simply, "You should not have left him alone to do this difficult thing. It would not have been asked of you."

With that, the dream ended, and I shot upright in bed. My pillow was now stained, whether with perspiration or tears I do not know. I threw off the covers and ran to the little metal camp cot that was my son's bed. There on my knees and through my tears I cradled him in my arms and spoke to him while he slept. I told him that every dad makes mistakes but that they don't mean to. I told him it wasn't his fault I had had a bad day. I told him that when boys are five or fifteen, dads sometimes forget and think they are fifty. I told him that I wanted him to be a small boy for a long, long time, be-

cause all too soon he would grow up and be a man and wouldn't be playing on the floor with his toys when I came home. I told him that I loved him and his mother and his sister more than anything in the world and that whatever challenges we had in life we would face them together. I told him that never again would I withhold my affection or my forgiveness from him, and never, I prayed, would he withhold them from me. I told him I was honored to be his father and that I would try with all my heart to be worthy of such a great responsibility.

Within the clasp of your arms

Well, I have not proven to be the perfect father I vowed to be that night and a thousand nights before and since. But I still want to be, and I believe this wise counsel from President Joseph F. Smith:

"Brethren, . . . If you will keep your [children] close to your heart, within the clasp of your arms; if you will make them . . . feel that you love them . . . and keep them near to you, they will not go very far from you, and they will not commit any very great sin. But it is when you turn them out of the home, turn them out of your affection . . . that [is what] drives them from you. . . .

"Fathers, if you wish your children to be taught in the principles of the gospel, if you wish them to love the truth and understand it, if you wish them to be obedient to and united with you, love them! and prove . . . that you do love them by your every word and act to[ward] them" (*Gospel Doctrine*, 5th ed. [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1966], pp. 282, 316).

Brethren, we all know fatherhood is not an easy assignment, but it ranks among the most imperative ever given, in time or eternity. We must not pull away from our children. We must keep trying, keep reaching, keep praying,

keep listening. We must keep them "within the clasp of our arms." That is

what friends are for. Of this I bear witness in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Brother Matthew S. Holland

When I first found out that I was going to be speaking to you tonight, I was sitting on the edge of my parents' bed, visiting with them after I had arrived home late that night. My parents' bed now tilts downward at a 45-degree angle, and my mom still carries a bruise on her left leg. Well, now that I've recovered, my dad says that I'm grateful to be here.

Influence of parents and family

Actually, I *am* very grateful to be here tonight to share a few words with you about the influence parents and the family have upon the youth of our Church. I would like to use my own family to illustrate this point. My parents and younger sister and brother show me love and give me support every day of my life. They care for my needs, both temporal and spiritual. These things are very important to me, and my family does them better than anyone else could, including the other organizations within the Church.

I love the Church's programs very much. But there seems to be an idea among many Latter-day Saints that the Church has the responsibility for spiritually raising the youth. Parents who hold this belief are robbing their children of one of the richest experiences we can have here in mortality.

The Primary, Sunday School, and seminary have taught us all lessons we will never forget. The Aaronic Priesthood and Young Men's programs have helped us honor our priesthood more fully. The Young Women's programs have taught spiritual, social, and domestic skills which are very important. The Melchizedek Priesthood and Relief Society programs keep the older, more rebellious generation in line. But

these programs will not be successful unless the same lessons are being taught in the home.

Mom's example of repentance and forgiveness

A lot will be said tonight about fathers. I would also like to mention mothers. One summer morning, in that same student apartment my dad just described, I told my mom I was going out to the playground. She said okay, but told me not to come running back in with muddy feet because she was in the middle of washing and waxing the floor. She repeated the statement again for emphasis as I scampered out the door in a pair of cutoffs, barefoot and shirtless. I must have played for an hour, and at least half of that time was spent in the mud. Then, knowing my mom would probably be finished with the floor and would read to me, I ran home full of boyish excitement and vigor. That same vigor kept me and my mud-covered feet going right up the steps, through the door, and halfway onto the nearly finished wash-and-wax job my mother was still stooped over.

Not waiting for a reaction and not wanting to leave my sin half finished, I ran across the rest of the floor, into my parents' room, and slammed the door shut. Not knowing if I should jump out the second-story window or if just hiding under the bed would do, I burst into tears and hurled my small body onto the bed and prepared myself for the possibility of meeting my great-great-grandfather sooner than I had expected.

I heard the door open quietly and looked over. Oh, good, I thought. She wasn't carrying a heated poker (paddle; switch; anything). Before she

could say anything, I cried out, "Mom, you don't love me." To which she replied, "I *do* love you, and I'll do anything to prove it." She then picked up my filthy, muddy feet and kissed them. Needless to say, that experience taught me a great deal about the meaning of repentance and forgiveness, which lessons the Church would later reinforce.

By small and simple things

Of course, it doesn't have to be a great single experience to influence a child. Alma the Younger, who had his own youthful problems, said to his son, Helaman, "Now ye may suppose that this is foolishness in me; but behold I say unto you, that by small and simple things are great things brought to pass" (Alma 37:6). As fathers and sons, we should realize what great things we can accomplish by actions which might seem unimportant or insignificant at the time.

For example, my dad and I have gone for ice cream after every general priesthood meeting since I became a deacon. We are going again tonight. Now, ice cream isn't absolutely necessary to enjoy priesthood meeting—but it helps. I also remember my father telling me a few weeks before I was ordained a deacon that he hoped whenever I prepared, blessed, or passed the sacrament I would always wear a white shirt and a tie. I'm sure I had heard the same advice from a Sunday School teacher or had read it in some manual, but it wasn't until my father said it that I intended to do it. By responding to my father's suggestion I have shown respect for the sacred ordinance of the sacrament. And that small word of advice also helped me understand that priesthood ordinances are not just work or assignments, but they are priceless privileges that I'm grateful to take part in.

Home—a place to learn, grow, ask, and express yourself freely

I recently learned another significant lesson from my father about his love for me. A few weeks ago the state 3-A basketball championship was being played on a Saturday night in Ogden. I was on Provo High's team, which was to play Mountain View High School for the championship. After the first quarter the team met for a huddle. As I got up off the nice soft chair I had become accustomed to, my eye caught sight of my mom and dad sitting on the front row. This might seem insignificant to you, but I was thrilled because in Provo that same night was one of the most important events of the year. It wasn't my father's inauguration or the annual commencement exercises. It was the BYU-University of Utah basketball game. But Dad left that game, as well as several General Authorities and other dignitaries he was hosting, to come to my game. That demonstration of love meant so much to me, not because my *game* was more important, but because *I* was more important. Is it any wonder I want to show that love in return? We do have a bond, not just as father to son—but friend to friend as well.

So, fathers, I plead with you not to think that the only important priesthood or spiritual lessons are taught by Church programs. Make your homes like heaven. Let them be a place where sons and daughters can learn, grow, ask, and express themselves free of criticism and to an open ear and heart.

Responsible to teach and edify our families

Elder Marvin J. Ashton said, "Home should be an anchor, a port in a storm, a refuge, a happy place in which to dwell. . . . Home should be where life's greatest lessons are taught and learned. Home can be the center of one's earthly faith where love and mutual responsibility are appropriately

blended" (*Ye Are My Friends* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1982], p. 44).

I want to bear my testimony of the responsibility we, the priesthood brethren of this Church, have to spiritually teach and edify our families. I would also like to publicly thank my dad for the great example he has been in my life, for the way in which he has always honored his priesthood. I love him very much. I can honestly say we are the best of friends, and it is my

fervent hope and prayer that everyone can have such a father-son relationship. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Thank you, President Holland and Matt.

We shall now hear from Elder James E. Faust, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder James E. Faust

Brethren, I come humbly to this pulpit. As a young man I recall President J. Reuben Clark pleading time after time in general priesthood meetings that there be unity in the priesthood. He would quote frequently the message of the Lord, "I say unto you, be one; and if ye are not one ye are not mine" (D&C 38:27).

Prepare for attacks on faith

Unity in the priesthood should reflect unity in our homes. One wonders why so many more homes are now being weakened and why so many families are disintegrating. The reasons are complex. No doubt it has much to do with the social disorders of the day. We are all subjected to sparking, enticing false advertising. Violence is powerfully portrayed everywhere. Our society is permeated with the suggestion that selfishness and instant gratification are acceptable or even respectable conduct. The evils of alcoholism have exploded and been magnified by other forms of drug abuse. The sexual revolution has been crippling to the spiritual, mental, and physical health of families.

Among the assaults on families are the attacks on our faith, for which parents should prepare their children. Some of it is coming from apostates

who had testimonies and now seem unable to leave the Church alone. One, complaining of Church policy, was heard to say: "I am so mad: if I had been paying my tithing I would quit." Persecution is not new to the devoted followers of Christ. More recently, however, the anger and venom of our enemies seem to be increasing. Brigham Young said, "We never began to build a temple without the bells of hell beginning to ring" (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, sel. John A. Widtsoe [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1973], p. 410). With twenty-two temples under construction or in the planning stage, there seems to be a lot of bells to be rung.

Why one family strong, another weak

When I hear of a family breaking up, I question if family home evening and family prayers have been regularly held in that home and if the law of tithing has been observed. Has that family revered the Sabbath day? Have the parents murmured against Church teachings and leaders? I wonder what could possibly justify the forsaking of eternal promises made in the temple, or what could warrant the breaking up of a family with children of tender years.

Why is one family strong, yet another family weak? The problems are infinitely complex. Yet, there are answers. Abundant evidence shows that the presence of a firm, loving father in the home is far more likely to produce responsible, law-abiding children than if the father is not there, or if he does not function as a father at home. In either case it throws a double burden on the mother.

Malachi said the whole world would be smitten with a curse if the hearts of the fathers were not turned to the children, and if the hearts of the children were not turned to their fathers. (See Malachi 4:6.)

Deep religious commitment under wise parental supervision

The presence of the father in the home, coupled with one or both of the parents being active in Church, and with discipline in the home, seems to produce stable, strong families.

Surely, the most important ingredient in producing family happiness for members of this Church is a deep religious commitment under wise, mature parental supervision. Devotion to God in the home seems to forge the spiritual moorings and stability that can help the family cope. Some may say this is an oversimplification of a very complex problem, yet I believe the answers lie within the framework of the restored gospel of Christ.

Enrich family life

One of the reasons for weakened families is the lack of absolutes. An absolute has no restriction, exception, or qualification. It is fixed and certain. There must be some things which family members should always try to do, and some activities that family members should scrupulously avoid. Truthfulness should be an absolute in every family.

How can parents and family members introduce and build familial strength? One of my closest boyhood

friends recently died of cancer. His family decided he would be happier spending his last days in his own home, so they took him out of the veterans hospital, where the cancer was diagnosed, and cared for him within the familiar walls of his own house. His eighty-one-year-old mother left her home in another state and moved in to supervise the tender, loving care. A sister and a brother left their homes far away several times to help in the emergencies. His children, some of whom also lived away, came and set up a twenty-four-hour vigil so that he would never be alone.

After a few months he passed away, wasted and emaciated, but contented and happy. He had been loved into death. The family could have left his care to the government and the veterans hospital, with no expense and little personal inconvenience being involved.

May I suggest other ways to enrich family life:

Family prayer

1. *Hold family prayer night and morning.* The source of our enormous individual strength and potential is no mystery. It is an endowment from God. We need not consume addicting chemicals found in drugs, including alcohol, to make us capable of meeting life's problems. We need only to draw constantly from the power source through humble prayer. It often takes a superhuman effort for parents of a busy family to get everyone out of bed and together for family prayer and scripture study. You may not always feel like praying when you finally get together, but it will pay great dividends if you persevere.

Study the scriptures

2. *Study the scriptures.* All of us need the strength that comes from daily reading of the scriptures. Parents must have a knowledge of the standard works to teach them to their children.

A child who has been taught from the scriptures has a priceless legacy. Children are fortified when they become acquainted with the heroic figures and stories of the scriptures such as Daniel in the lions' den, David and Goliath, Nephi, Helaman and the stripping warriors, and all the others.

Having prayer, scripture study, and meals together gives incredibly important time to talk and listen as parents and children, brothers and sisters.

Teach children to work, to be disciplined, and to be obedient

3. *Teach children to work.* Every household has routine daily chores that children can be responsible for.

4. *Teach discipline and obedience.* If parents do not discipline their children and teach them to obey, society may discipline them in a way neither the parents nor the children will like. Dr. Lee Salk, child psychologist, said: "The 'do your own thing' trend has interfered with people developing close and trusting family relationships. It tells people that they are neurotic if they feel a sense of responsibility for the feelings of other family members. People are also told to let all their feelings out, even if it is very hurtful to someone else" (Special Section: Families, *U.S. News and World Report, Inc.*, 16 June 1980, p. 60). As Dr. Salk states, this is, of course, patently wrong. Without discipline and obedience in the home, the unity of the family collapses.

Loyalty, self-worth, and self-reliance

5. *Place a high priority on loyalty to each other.* The dictionary defines the word *loyal* as being "constant and faithful in any relation implying trust or confidence; bearing true allegiance to the constituted authority" (*Britannica World Language Dictionary*, s.v. "loyalty"). If family members are not loyal to each other, they cannot be loyal to themselves.

6. *Teach principles of self-worth and self-reliance.* One of the main problems in families today is that we spend less and less time together. Some spend an extraordinary amount of time, when they are together, in front of the television, which robs them of personal time for reinforcing feelings of self-worth. Time together is precious time—time needed to talk, to listen, to encourage, and to show how to do things. Less time together can result in loneliness, which may produce inner feelings of being unsupported, untreasured, and inadequate. Self-worth is reinforced in many ways. When parents say to a son or daughter, leaving the home for some activity, the simple but meaningful words, "Remember who you are," they have helped that child feel important.

Develop family traditions

7. *Develop family traditions.* Some of the great strengths of families can be found in their own traditions, which may consist of many things: making special occasions of the blessing of children, baptisms, ordinations to the priesthood, birthdays, fishing trips, skits on Christmas Eve, family home evening, and so forth. The traditions of each family are unique and are provided in large measure by the mother's imprint.

Cultivate spirit of love

8. *Do everything in the spirit of love.* Elder LeGrand Richards shared with us the tender relationship he had with his father. Said he, "I walked into my father's apartment when he was just about ninety, . . . and as I opened the door, he stood up and walked toward me and took me in his arms and hugged me and kissed me. He always did that. . . . Taking me in his arms and calling me by my kid name, he said, 'Grandy, my boy, I love you'" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1967, pp. 111-12).

Some parents have difficulty expressing their love physically or vocally. I do not ever recall my own father using the words, "Son, I love you," but he showed it in a thousand ways which were more eloquent than words. He rarely missed a practice, a game, a race, or any activity in which his sons participated.

The touch and time of the mother in the home makes it warm, comfortable, and pleasant. Our wives and mothers deserve special support. President George Albert Smith, addressing husbands and fathers, said:

"Some seem to think that the woman's responsibility is to take care of the home and everything else while the man goes to meetings. I want to tell you that your chief responsibility is in your own home" (Seventies and Stake Missionary Conference, 4 Oct. 1941, p. 8).

This was confirmed by President Harold B. Lee: "The greatest of the Lord's work you brethren will ever do as fathers will be within the walls of your own home" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1973, p. 130).

Let there be no ill will or anger between parents and children, brothers and sisters, and kinsmen. Lingering feelings of hurt or disagreement should be settled quickly. Why wait until one party is dying or dead? May the rich humanness of warm, loving family life be restored and prevail in all our kinship.

Converting and strengthening parents

How can our priesthood leaders, already administratively burdened, be helpful to parents in order to help their children? I believe the answer is basic. In the last days of the Savior's ministry he said to Peter: "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat:

"But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art

converted, strengthen thy brethren" (Luke 22:31-32).

There needs to be a converting and a strengthening of parents. This comes about by the teaching, the understanding, and the applying of gospel principles. It is a great challenge to the priesthood leaders to have every one in our wards, branches, and quorums be strengthened in their understanding of the gospel. Priesthood leaders are clothed with great authority. When bishops and other priesthood leaders are needed for specific family or personal reasons, their availability is a great strength and comfort. Their genuine interest and concern for us as individuals is a vital support mechanism.

Ministering in Church and in families

Now, brethren, in conclusion may I say something to promote better understanding in our work. Let us not perceive that just because we are holding our meetings, making our home teaching visits, and are involved in other activities that we are necessarily fully serving the membership of the Church. All of the Spirit, the goodness, and the mercy of Christ should be found in our ministering in the Church and in our families.

Religion in the distant past has often been cloaked with rigorous fanaticism, bigotry, and intolerance. With the restoration of the gospel came the holy priesthood of God, to be exercised not in the spirit of coercion and compulsion but in the spirit of free agency, resting on a foundation of "gentleness and meekness, and . . . love unfeigned" (D&C 121:41). This is the sweet spirit of the Christ himself.

Reach for those who have lost their way

Now, these exalted concepts must be implemented by wise men. As direction is given in the Church and in our homes, there should be no spirit of dictatorship and no *unrighteous domin-*

ion. The keys and powers of the priesthood can be "handled only upon the principles of righteousness" (D&C 121:36).

God, through his prophets, has given the priesthood in recent times the great challenge to advance worldwide the holy work in which we are engaged. All worthy men may now be given the priesthood. With the coming of these inspired changes, I wonder if there has been an enlarging of attitude based upon the exalted principles the Savior taught. Has the extended responsibility of the priesthood caused us to have a better understanding of our work? Are some of us unsuccessful in differentiating between the sin and the sinner?

Many of us have sat in ward councils, priesthood executive councils, and other meetings on the ward levels. We took the time to identify the names of those who had lost their way. But our efforts to reach them could have been more effective. At times we were too judgmental. Sometimes we lost track of the individual in our focus on the program. I do not criticize the programs and activities. I am grateful for them. They are necessary. They are inspired and great. I only ask for greater concern for the individual and the family, which after all is the purpose of God's holy work. "This is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39).

May we put our lives and homes in order. We must stay true to the great absolutes of the restored gospel: namely, Christ and him crucified, the divine restoration of the gospel in our time, the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith's divine calling as a prophet of God, and continuing revelation to his successors, according to the needs of the Church and its members.

If we are united and go forward under the leadership of those who have the keys to the kingdom of God on earth, our homes will be enriched, our lives purified, and the gates of hell will not prevail against us. May we follow the counsel of Alma, and "stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places that ye may be in, even until death" (Mosiah 18:9). In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder James E. Faust of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has just addressed us.

We shall now stand and sing "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet," following which President Ezra Taft Benson, President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will speak to us.

The choir and congregation sang "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet."

President Ezra Taft Benson

My beloved brethren, this is a glorious sight! How we appreciate the service you so willingly give to the Lord. We know God will bless you for it.

To all you young men—Aaronic Priesthood holders—we love and appreciate you. We are so grateful for your dedication and faithfulness. With all my soul, I encourage you to resolve now that you will be clean and worthy

to serve the Lord all the days of your life. Therein is true happiness.

A call to the priesthood

Tonight, I speak to all priesthood holders, you who have responsibility for our Father's children. My message is "A Call to the Priesthood: 'Feed My Sheep.'"

Most of you are familiar with the Savior's description of members of the Church and their leaders. True followers He called sheep, and priesthood leaders He called shepherds.

We remember His unforgettable example of a true shepherd's concern for his sheep:

"If a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, . . . and seeketh that which is gone astray?

"And if it so be that he find it, . . . he rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray" (Matthew 18:12-13).

A true shepherd would give his life for his sheep

In Jesus' time, the Palestinian shepherd was noted for his protection of his sheep. Unlike modern shepherders, the shepherd always walked ahead of his flock. He led them. The shepherd knew each of the sheep and usually had a name for each. The sheep knew his voice and trusted him and would not follow a stranger. Thus, when called, the sheep would come to him. (See John 10:14, 16.)

At night shepherds would bring their sheep to a corral called a sheepfold. High walls surrounded the sheepfold, and thorns were placed on top of these walls to prevent wild animals and thieves from climbing over.

Sometimes, however, a wild animal driven by hunger would leap over the walls into the midst of the sheep, frightening them. Such a situation separated the true shepherd—one who

loved his sheep—from the hireling—one who worked only for pay and duty.

The true shepherd was willing to give his life for the sheep. He would go in amongst the sheep and fight for their welfare. The hireling, on the other hand, valued his own personal safety above the sheep and would usually flee from the danger.

Christ, the True Shepherd

Jesus used this common illustration of his day to declare that He was the Good Shepherd, the True Shepherd. Because of His love for His brothers and sisters, He would willingly and voluntarily lay down His life for them. (See John 10:17-18.)

Eventually, the Good Shepherd did give His life for the sheep—for you and me, for all of us.

"Feed my sheep"

Later, after His resurrection, Jesus directed Peter to "feed my lambs. . . . Feed my sheep. . . . Feed my sheep." (See John 21:15-17.)

Three times this charge was repeated to the newly designated head shepherd.

Do you think that Peter recalled the parable of the good shepherd?

Do you think that Peter could remember what a good shepherd was to be, what he was to do?

Do you think he ever questioned his Lord's example as being too idealistic?

It must have impressed Peter deeply, for tradition has it that he also willingly gave his life for the cause.

Sheep need care in Church today

The expressive symbolism of the Good Shepherd is not without significant parallel in the Church today. The sheep need to be led by watchful shepherds. Too many are wandering, some are being enticed away by momentary distractions, and others have become completely lost.

Saturday, April 2, 1983

First Day

Ponder carefully these representative samples from several stakes which illustrate the magnitude of our problem.

—A stake in the eastern part of the United States has slightly over 300 Melchizedek Priesthood holders and an equivalent number of prospective elders—lost sheep!

—A stake in Salt Lake City has 1,100 Melchizedek Priesthood holders, but also 1,100 prospective elders. Where, we ask, are the shepherds?

—A stake in England has 360 Melchizedek Priesthood holders, but over 800 prospective elders, a very small percentage of whom attend their meetings. We ask, How will the sheep survive without the safety of the sheepfold and watch-care of a loving shepherd?

Loving care can bring results

We know great results can take place when the shepherds make a concerted effort and show concern.

In one stake in southern Utah, concerted efforts have been made to reactivate prospective elders. In a period of two years, over 100 men were ordained elders in the Melchizedek Priesthood. Their ordinations raised sacrament meeting attendance in the stake by 14 percent.

A stake in Arizona advanced 47 prospective elders to the Melchizedek Priesthood; another in the state of Washington advanced the same number. Both continue to use the temple preparation seminars.

The districts of one mission in Great Britain have reactivated more than 600 members with the help of full-time and stake missionaries.

A stake in South America, through prayerful and earnest efforts, reactivated 146 prospective elders in less than one year. Forty-five more are now ready for ordination to offices in the Melchizedek Priesthood.

We realize, as in times past, some of the sheep will rebel and "are as a wild flock which fleeth from the shep-

herd" (Mosiah 8:21). But most of our problems stem from lack of loving and attentive shepherding.

With a shepherd's care, many of our new members, those newly born into the gospel, would be nurtured by gospel knowledge and new standards. Such attention would ensure that there would be no returning to old habits and old friends.

With a shepherd's loving care, many of our young people, our young lambs, would not be wandering. And if they were, the crook of the shepherd's staff, a loving arm, would retrieve them.

With a shepherd's care, many of those who are now independent of the flock can still be reclaimed. Many have married outside the Church and assumed the life-styles of their marriage partners.

Priesthood watch-care

The problem, I repeat, is serious and considerable in its magnitude.

We offer no *new* solutions to this *old* problem. The charge Jesus gave to Peter, which He emphasized by repeating it three times, is the proven solution: "Feed my lambs. . . . Feed my sheep. . . . Feed my sheep."

The answer, then, is found in shepherding the flock. In other words, priesthood watch-care. It is real concern by a true shepherd, not just the feigned concern a hireling might show.

Here are some questions every true shepherd should ask:

Shepherds—home teachers:

Are you watching over your families as you should?

Are you ministering to their needs?

Do you care enough about your families' welfare that you find out their interests, that you remember birthdays and special events, and that you continually pray for them?

Are you the first one to the home when the family needs assistance?

Does the head of the household call on you first?

Are you attentive to the needs of each member of the family?

When one of your assigned families moves, do you know where they have moved? Do you make an effort to obtain their new address? Have you checked with neighbors, friends, and relatives?

Shepherds—stake presidents, bishops, quorum leaders:

Are you welcoming into your ranks new converts?

Do they *feel* your love and concern?

Are new converts invited into your homes?

Do they know what family home evening is and how to use it?

Does the family feel welcome and comfortable in your midst?

Do you ordain worthy male members to offices of the priesthood following baptism?

Do you give them meaningful Church assignments?

Shepherds—stake presidents, bishops, quorum leaders:

Do you leave the ninety and nine and search after the lost one?

Do you call and appoint advisers and others who can reach impressionable youth and visit them on their "own ground"?

Have you fully implemented the youth program, and are you using this program to meet the individual needs of the youth?

Are you watchful over the young singles, the divorced, and those with special needs?

Do you carefully and spiritually prepare those who enter military service?

Are you especially attentive to young men between the transition period from Aaronic Priesthood to Melchizedek Priesthood?

Bishops, do you make sure they come under the care of their new shepherd, the quorum president?

Do you provide significant Church-service opportunities for our returned missionaries so these young

men and women do not drift into inactivity because they do not have occasion to serve as they have been doing for eighteen months?

Do you use visiting teachers to augment home teaching?

Are you teaching fathers their duties?

Do you have temple preparation seminars to encourage prospective elders to prepare for the Melchizedek Priesthood and the temple?

Do you have older prospective elders assigned to the high priests and invited to join those with whom they would feel most comfortable?

Are younger prospective elders invited to participate with the elders quorums?

Some leaders say that some men are past hope, but, as the angel told Abraham, nothing is impossible with the Lord! (See Genesis 18:14.) One brother who was regarded by some as a hopeless case tearfully exclaimed to the temple worker at the sealing altar, "I don't know why I waited so long for this blessing!"

In a recent Saturday evening meeting of leaders I heard a determined brother state, "I've sure had a time with the devil since I started to become active. Prior to that time, I just went along with him."

Are we helping the one who needs help because he has started on the way back to full activity?

Shepherds—stake presidents, bishops, quorum leaders:

Are you attentive to the records of Church members under your charge—especially those who are not participating with you in meetings?

Do you obtain forwarding addresses from home teachers when members leave your midst, or are you just relieved to get them off your records and send their records to the "address unknown" file?

Shepherds—fathers in Israel:

Are you holding family prayer with your family, morning and evening?

Do you hold a regular, consistent, inspiring family home evening once a week?

Do you lead out in spiritual matters?

Is your example what it should be before those whom you lead?

Do you ask and pray for the welfare of your own?

Do you love them?

Would you give your life for them?

Shepherds—all who hold the priesthood:

We ask you solemnly to evaluate your performance in relation to these matters.

We call on you, as Paul did to the elders of Ephesus:

“Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over . . . which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood” (Acts 20:28; italics added).

We repeat to you the charge Jesus gave Peter. We repeat it with the same emphasis, the same repetition: “Feed my lambs. . . . Feed my Sheep. . . . Feed my sheep”!

We call on you to extend yourselves with renewed dedication. We want you to do something you have not been doing. We want you to watch, to feed, to tend, and to care for the flock and, in the event that some are temporarily lost, we challenge you to find them.

No greater work than saving souls

Why should you do this?

Because you love your brothers and sisters. You want them to have joy in our Father’s kingdom.

There is no greater work in all the world than that of saving souls. Incom-

parable joy can be yours when you bring souls unto Him!

If you will be prayerful and earnest in your desires to tend his flock, the Lord will bless you with success.

This we promise you!

God bless you, my brethren of the priesthood, watchful shepherds all, to know your flock and to be known of them. May we carefully attend and protect them so that they may remain safe and free from harm. This is our challenge, our duty, and our joy, which joy I promise to all of you as you accept the challenge and do your duty. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Thank you, President Benson, for that great challenge.

We note that the nationwide CBS Radio Tabernacle Choir broadcast will be from 9:30 to 10:00 o’clock Sunday morning. Those desiring to attend in the Tabernacle must be in their seats before 9:15 A.M.

We urge you to be careful and courteous in your driving as you leave the Tabernacle tonight. It has been storming and we hope that you will have no trouble.

The beautiful music for this priesthood session has been furnished by the Ricks College men’s choir. We are grateful to you young brethren for your inspiring music and express sincere thanks for the service you have given here tonight. We know that you have a long ride home, and we pray that you may travel safely.

Following my closing remarks, the choir will sing “Jesus, My Savior True,” following which Elder Ronald E. Poelman, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will offer the benediction.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

To the boys: story of David

I appreciate the large number of boys who make so great an effort to come to these meetings. It is not easy for many of them. We are grateful to you. I should like to say some things particularly to you, and I do so by recounting a portion of a story with which you are already familiar. It is the story of David, the son of Jesse.

As you will recall, the army of Israel under the leadership of King Saul was engaged in a deadly war with the army of the Philistines. One army was poised on one hill, the other on an opposite hill, with a valley in between. Now, the Philistines had among their men a great giant of a man named Goliath of Gath. His height was six cubits and a span. If I have figured correctly, that would put him somewhere in the neighborhood of nine feet tall. What a basketball center he might have made!

Clad in his armor, he came down to the valley and called out to the army of Israel:

"Choose you a man for you, and let him come down to me.

"If he be able to fight with me, and to kill me, then will we be your servants: but if I prevail against him, and kill him, then shall ye be our servants, and serve us. . . .

"I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together" (1 Samuel 17:8-10).

When Saul and the army of Israel looked at this giant and heard his chilling challenge, they were frightened because they had no one of their own of such stature.

Now, while all of this was going on, Jesse, David's father, asked his young son to take some food to his three brothers in the army. When he arrived at the battleground, Goliath came out again, issuing the same challenge, which David heard. There was fear throughout the army of Israel.

David, who was no more than a boy, said to the king, (and I paraphrase his language): "King, why are you so afraid of this giant? I will go and fight him."

Saul replied, "Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him: for thou art but a youth, and he [is] a man of war [trained] from his youth" (1 Samuel 17:33).

David armed with faith

David then persuaded Saul to let him try. He told the king of how he had fought with a lion and a bear to save his father's sheep and concluded by saying that the Lord would deliver him out of the hand of the Philistine. Saul, possibly thinking that one more life lost would not be serious among the great losses they had already sustained, said to David, "Go, and the Lord be with thee" (1 Samuel 17:37).

Saul then placed armor on David until the boy could scarcely walk. David said unto the king, "I cannot wear this," and he took the armor off.

He then "took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had . . . and his sling was in his hand" (1 Samuel 17:40).

This stripling of a boy, with only a slingshot and five stones and without any armor other than the armor of faith, went down into the valley to face Goliath.

Goliath armed with sword, spear, shield

"And when the Philistine looked about, and saw David, he disdained him: for he was but a youth, and ruddy, and of a fair countenance.

"And the Philistine said unto David, Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves?"

And Goliath swore at David, saying, "Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field."

Then David spoke these great words:

"Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield; but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied.

"This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel" (adapted from 1 Samuel 17:42-46).

That was brave talk for a boy who stood against a nine-foot giant.

In anger Goliath came at him. Then David, running toward the giant, "put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slang it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead, that the stone sunk into his forehead; and he fell upon his face to the earth" (1 Samuel 17:49).

Evil giants to overpower in our lives

You know the rest of that story. I would like to bring it down into your own lives. There are Goliaths all around you, hulking giants with evil intent to destroy you. These are not nine-foot-tall men, but they are men and institutions that control attractive but evil things that may challenge and weaken and destroy you. Included in these are beer and other liquors and tobacco. Those who market these products would like to enslave you into their use. There are drugs of various kinds which, I am told, are relatively easy to obtain in many high schools. For those who peddle them, this is a multimillion-dollar industry, a giant web of evil. There is pornography, seductive and interesting and inviting. It

has become a giant industry, producing magazines, films, and other materials designed to take your money and lead you toward activities that would destroy you.

The giants who are behind these efforts are formidable and skillful. They have gained vast experience in the war they are carrying on. They would like to ensnare you.

It is almost impossible to entirely avoid exposure to their products. You see these materials on all sides. But you need not fear if you have the slingshot of truth in your hands. You have been counseled and taught and advised. You have the stones of virtue and honor and integrity to use against these enemies who would like to conquer you. Insofar as you are concerned, you can hit them "between the eyes," to use a figurative expression. You can triumph over them by disciplining yourselves to avoid them. You can say to the whole lot of them as David said to Goliath, "Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield; but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied."

Name temptation Goliath and do as David did

Victory will be yours. There is not a boy within the sound of my voice who needs to succumb to any of these forces. You hold the priesthood of God. You are a son of God. You have His power within you to sustain you. You have the right to ministering angels about you to protect you. Do not let Goliath frighten you. Stand your ground and hold your place, and you will be triumphant. As the years pass, you will look back with satisfaction upon the battles you have won in your individual lives.

When temptation comes your way, name that boastful, deceitful giant "Goliath!" and do with him as David did to the Philistine of Gath. God bless each of you, I humbly pray.

To older brethren: tales of unhappy people

Now for a few minutes I would like to go to another subject, speaking particularly to you older brethren.

I have a friend who built a beautiful home and furnished it with the very best of carpets, furniture, appliances, and all that money can buy. Within its walls he kept his fine automobiles and his expensive jewelry. Then, fearful of intruders who might enter and rob him, he had installed expensive dead-bolt locks so that he had to use a key to get out as well as to get in. He put bars on the windows and doors, and was like a prisoner looking out of his own home, as one might do out of a jail. He installed costly electronic surveillance devices to turn on lights and set off sirens should any unwelcome individual enter. He landscaped largely without trees or shrubbery so there would be no place for a thief to hide. And he smugly said to himself, "Now I am secure."

But what he did not realize is that neither bars nor dead-bolts, neither lights nor sirens nor anything of the kind would have the slightest effect on intruders of another variety who could destroy the lives of his children, despoil the marriage which had been the source of his happiness over many years, bind him with cords of meanness and bitterness and hate toward those he had once loved, and lock him in a dungeon cell of despair and misery.

Brethren, I spend much time listening to the tales of unhappy people. As a percentage of the entire membership of the Church, they constitute a relatively small number. But there are too many, and every case is a tragedy. With few exceptions, it would appear that the husband and the father is the chief offender, on whom the intruders of sin and selfishness take their greatest toll.

Guard homes against insidious intruders

Brethren, I know it is an old subject, and one that has been dealt with much. But I repeat it again: *Guard your homes*. How foolish it seems to install bars and bolts and electronic devices against thieves and molesters while more insidious intruders come in as invited guests.

I say to you what I said to the boys—avoid pornography as you would a plague. I recall an assignment some years back to restore the blessings of a man who had been excommunicated from the Church because of his sin. He came to my office with his wife. I spoke with them individually. I asked him how it all began. He held a responsible position in the Church. He was likewise a professional man with high responsibility in the community.

His trouble began, he said, when he picked up a pornographic magazine to read on a plane. It intrigued him. It appealed to him. He found himself buying more of these things. Then he sought out movies which titillated him and excited him. Knowing that his wife would be a party to none of this, he went alone. He found occasion to leave town and go to other cities where he could more easily indulge his desires. He then found excuses to stay late at his office and asked his secretary to stay with him. One thing led to another until he succumbed.

With tears rolling down his cheeks, he sat across the desk from me and cursed the day he had read that first magazine. He spoke of his love for the wife who had forgiven him and remained true to him. He spoke of his love for his children, who had been shamed and embarrassed by his actions. He told of the hell through which he had walked for some four years from the time of his excommunication. He spoke of his love for the Church and of his desire to again enjoy its full blessings.

In the presence of his wife, I placed my hands upon his head and in

the authority of the holy priesthood restored his priesthood, his temple endowment, his temple sealing, and all other blessings which he had formerly held. This great, strong man sobbed like a baby under my hands while his wife, holding her hand in his, wept like a child.

At the conclusion of that blessing, they embraced one another and he asked her to forgive him. She said she had forgiven him, and that she loved him and always would.

They were happy when they left, happier than they had been in years. And I was happy, too. But I thought of the terrible price he had paid and of the price he had exacted of his family through his foolishness and transgression.

Guard against unhappy ending

Unfortunately, there is not always that kind of happy ending. In many cases there is divorce with bitterness and rancor. What was once love has turned to hate. Children's lives are blighted. Hopes become as ashes. So

often there is only misery and loneliness and regret.

Brethren, keep your affections within your homes. Regard as your most precious possession in time or eternity she with whom you joined hands over the altar in the House of the Lord and to whom you pledged your love and loyalty and affection for time and all eternity. Your companion, your children, and you yourself will then know and feel a security far greater than any that can be bought with hardware and gadgetry.

God bless you, my brethren, young and old, that the watch-care of the Lord may be over you, that you may stay close to Him and be deserving of His preserving hand, I humbly ask, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "Jesus, My Savior True."

Elder Ronald E. Poelman gave the benediction.

SECOND DAY MORNING MEETING

FOURTH SESSION

The fourth session of the general conference commenced at 10:00 A.M. on Sunday, April 3, 1983. President Gordon B. Hinckley, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

The Tabernacle Choir provided the music for this session with Jerold Ottley directing and John Longhurst at the organ.

Prior to the opening of the session, the Choir sang "Arise, O Glorious Zion" without announcement.

President Hinckley made the following remarks:

President Gordon B. Hinckley

We greet you this Easter morning as we with the Christian world at large celebrate the resurrection of the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior and our Redeemer. How appropriate that we of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are convened in our great annual world conference on this sacred Sabbath. This is the fourth session of the 153rd Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We welcome all who are present this morning in the Salt Lake Tabernacle on Temple Square.

We also acknowledge those tuned to this conference by radio and television and those who are seated in the

overflow congregation in the Assembly Hall where Elders Marion D. Hanks and Richard G. Scott preside. We welcome likewise those who are viewing this conference through a great satellite network which will carry the proceedings to some five hundred and fifty stake centers of the Church. President Spencer W. Kimball is watching the proceedings of this session on television. He sends his love and blessings, as does President Marion G. Romney who is watching it from his home.

We acknowledge the presence this morning of government, education, and civic leaders, and officers and members of the Church from many lands who have assembled to worship and to counsel together in this conference.

The Tabernacle Choir, under the direction of Jerold Ottley with John Longhurst at the organ, is providing the music for this session.

The Choir opened these services by singing "Arise, O Glorious Zion"

and will now sing "Sweet Hour of Prayer," following which Elder Gene R. Cook, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will offer the invocation.

The Choir sang "Sweet Hour of Prayer."

Elder Gene R. Cook offered the invocation.

The Choir sang "How Great the Wisdom and the Love" without announcement.

President Hinckley

The Tabernacle Choir has sung "How Great the Wisdom and the Love."

It will now be our privilege to hear from President Ezra Taft Benson, President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

President Ezra Taft Benson

My beloved brethren and sisters, one hundred and fifty years ago the Prophet Joseph Smith organized the School of the Prophets. The purpose of this school was to prepare selected members of the priesthood to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ to all the world.

First School of the Prophets meetings

In the absence of a temple, the first School of the Prophets was held in a small room in the home of Bishop Newel K. Whitney. Brigham Young was one of the early participants in this school, and he described a scene which frequently presented itself during meetings:

"The brethren came to that place for hundreds of miles to attend school in a little room probably no larger than eleven by fourteen. When they assembled together in this room after breakfast, the first they did was to light their pipes, and, while smoking, talk about the great things of the kingdom, . . . and as soon as the pipe was out of their mouths a large chew of tobacco would then be taken. Often when the Prophet entered the room to give the school instructions he would find himself in a cloud of tobacco smoke. This, and the complaints of his wife at having to clean [the] floor, made the Prophet think upon the matter, and he inquired of the Lord relating to the conduct of the Elders in using tobacco" (*Journal of Discourses*, 12:158).

A principle with a promise

In response to this inquiry by the Prophet, the Lord gave him a revelation in the Whitney home. This revelation is known as the Word of Wisdom.

At first the revelation was not given as a commandment. It was given as "a principle with promise, adapted to the capacity of the weak and the weakest of all saints, who are or can be called saints" (D&C 89:3). This allowed time for the Saints to adjust to the principles contained in the revelation.

While I was on my first mission in Great Britain in 1922, some of the sisters had difficulty giving up their tea. I read that passage to them, and most of them quit drinking tea because they did not want to be considered the "weakest" of those who are or can be called Saints.

A binding commandment and distinctive practice

In 1851, President Brigham Young proposed to the general conference of the Church that all Saints formally covenant to keep the Word of Wisdom. This proposal was unanimously upheld by the membership of the Church. Since that day, the revelation has been a binding commandment on all Church members.

The Word of Wisdom is one of the recognized and distinctive practices of members of the Church. Generally, others not of our faith acknowledge that members in good standing abstain from tobacco, coffee, tea, and all alcoholic beverages.

Scientific studies have confirmed that Latter-day Saints have less incidence of heart problems, all forms of cancer, and other diseases because of their adherence to the Word of Wisdom.

These studies have demonstrated that not only will one live a longer life, but also that the quality of one's life will be better.

Evidence of Joseph Smith's prophetic calling

The Word of Wisdom is one of the evidences of the inspiration of Joseph Smith's prophetic calling. Let me tell you why.

Several years ago an investigator gave this testimonial about Joseph Smith. He said that the Word of Wisdom was the revelation that most attracted him to investigate the Church. "There is no possible way," he said, "that Joseph Smith could have known what we now know in the medical world about the harmful effects of tobacco, alcohol, tea, and coffee. Yet this has all been substantiated by medical science."

He said that this was the beginning of his earnest investigation of the gospel, for he reasoned that if Joseph Smith could be so accurate on a matter that medical science validated over a hundred years later, the rest of the teachings of the Church deserved investigation. He did so and is now a member of the Church.

Young people: God governs by law

One principle of the gospel that all young people of the Church should understand is this: God, our Heavenly Father, governs His children by law. He has instituted laws for our perfection. If we obey His laws, we receive the blessings pertaining to those laws. If we do not obey, we receive the consequences.

The Word of Wisdom is a law—a principle with promise. If we obey the provisions of the law, we receive the promises. If we do not, there will be both temporal and spiritual consequences.

What are the provisions of the law known as the Word of Wisdom?

Admonitions and counsels in Word of Wisdom

The revelation defines and admonishes abstinence from harmful

substances and beverages in these words:

"Strong drinks [or, in other words, alcoholic or harmful beverages] are not for the belly" (D&C 89:7).

"Tobacco is not for the body . . . and is not good for man" (D&C 89:8).

"Hot drinks [defined as tea and coffee] are not for the body" (D&C 89:9).

Those foods which are good for man are described in these words:

"All wholesome herbs God hath ordained for the constitution, nature, and use of man—

"Every herb in the season thereof, and every fruit in the season thereof;

"Flesh . . . of beasts and of the fowls of the air . . . are to be used sparingly;

"All grain is ordained for the use of man . . . to be the staff of life. . . .

"All grain is good for the food of man; as also the fruit of the vine" (D&C 89:10–12, 14, 16).

In this revelation the Lord counsels us to use meat sparingly. I have often felt that the Lord is further counseling us in this revelation against indiscriminately killing animals, for He has said elsewhere in scripture, "Wo be unto man that sheddeth blood or that wasteth flesh and hath no need" (D&C 49:21).

Obedience—the greater blessing

Wheat is particularly singled out as being good for man, as is the fruit of the vine—vegetables and all fruits. This is the wisdom of the Lord on the matter of sound nutrition and diet.

The Word of Wisdom allows us to know that the Lord is vitally concerned about the health of His Saints. He has graciously given us counsel for improving our health, endurance, and resistance to many diseases.

The temporal promise for obedience is: They "shall receive health in their navel and marrow to their bones; . . . [they] shall run and not be

weary and shall walk and not faint" (D&C 89:18, 20).

I have always felt, however, that the greater blessing of obedience to the Word of Wisdom and all other commandments is spiritual.

Listen to the spiritual promise: "All saints who remember to keep and do these sayings, walking in obedience *to the commandments*, . . . shall find wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures" (D&C 89:18, 19; italics added).

Some have thought this promise was contingent on just keeping the provisions of the Word of Wisdom. But you will notice we must walk in obedience to *all* the commandments. Then we shall receive specific spiritual promises. This means we must obey the law of tithing, keep the Sabbath day holy, keep morally clean and chaste, and obey all other commandments.

When we do all this, the promise is: They "shall find wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures" (D&C 89:19).

What father and mother would not want the inspiration of the Lord in rearing their children? I testify these blessings can be yours. Surely parents would not want, through disobedience, to prevent their children from receiving the Lord's blessings. All fathers and mothers in Israel should qualify themselves for this promise.

Living the commandments of God is a condition of worthiness for entrance into the House of the Lord. There wisdom and "great treasures of knowledge" are given that relate to our happiness in this life and joy throughout eternity.

Brothers and sisters and friends, learn this principle. The Lord will increase our knowledge, wisdom, and capacity to obey when we obey His fundamental laws. This is what the Prophet Joseph Smith meant when he said we could have "sudden strokes of ideas" which come into our minds as "pure intelligence." (See *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph

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Fielding Smith [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1938], p. 151.) This is revelation. We must learn to rely on the Holy Ghost so we can use it to guide our lives and the lives of those for whom we have responsibility.

I do not believe that a member of the Church can have an active, vibrant testimony of the gospel without keeping the commandments. A testimony is to have current inspiration to know the work is true, not something we receive only once. The Holy Ghost abides with those who honor, respect, and obey God's laws. And it is that Spirit which gives inspiration to the individual. Humbly I testify to the reality of this promise.

Warning to modern generation

There is another part of this revelation that constitutes a pertinent warning to this modern generation: "In consequence of evils and designs which do and will exist in the hearts of conspiring men in the last days, I have warned you, and forewarn you, by giving unto you this word of wisdom by revelation" (D&C 89:4).

The Lord foresaw the situation of today when motives for money would cause men to conspire to entice others to take noxious substances into their bodies. Advertisements which promote beer, wine, liquors, coffee, tobacco, and other harmful substances are examples of what the Lord foresaw. But the most pernicious example of an evil conspiracy in our time is those who induce young people into the use of drugs.

My young brothers and sisters, in all love, we give you warning that Satan and his emissaries will strive to entice you to use harmful substances, because they well know if you partake, your spiritual powers will be inhibited and you will be in their evil power. Stay away from those places or people which would influence you to break the

commandments of God. Keep the commandments of God and you will have the wisdom to know and discern that which is evil.

Restoration and growth in Kirtland

This year marks the 150th anniversary of the Word of Wisdom in this dispensation. Marking this anniversary, the Church is restoring the Newel K. Whitney store in Kirtland, Ohio. The store is a most ordinary structure by any modern standard, but it is the place where sacred revelations of God were received. One hundred and fifty years have scientifically confirmed the Word of Wisdom as a formula for sound health. One hundred and fifty years' experience with Saints living these laws has also confirmed that God fulfills His spiritual promises to His Saints.

May we as Saints of God keep all His commandments. May we be pure and holy so we can have the constant companionship of the Holy Ghost. Let us be distinctive as a people because of our obedience to God's laws.

A new day is dawning in Kirtland. A few years ago, I broke ground for the first meetinghouse to be built in Kirtland since the dedication of the first temple in 1836.

I recently returned and dedicated a beautiful new building. Following the dedication, we participated in a special reception attended by fifty-eight nonmembers, descendants of the early Saints in Kirtland. Some of these nonmembers have now been baptized and others are being prepared.

We anticipate that within the next year we will once again have a stake in Kirtland where the very first stake of the Church was organized.

I testify that this is the Lord's Church restored in this modern day. Jesus Christ lives. He directs the affairs of this Church and is close to His servants.

I further testify that obedience to all of God's laws brings the precious promise of peace in this life and eternal life in the world to come, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "Go, Ye Messengers of Glory" without announcement.

President Hinckley

We have heard from President Ezra Taft Benson, President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, followed by the Tabernacle Choir singing "Go, Ye Messengers of Glory."

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder Thomas S. Monson, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder Thomas S. Monson

Anonymous donor

Recently, I approached the reception desk of a large hospital to learn the room number of a patient I had come to visit. This hospital, like almost every other in the land, was undergoing a massive expansion. Behind the desk where the receptionist sat was a magnificent plaque which bore an inscription of thanks to donors who had made possible the expansion. The name of each donor who had contributed \$100,000 appeared in a flowing script, etched on an individual brass placard suspended from the main plaque by a glittering chain.

The names of the benefactors were well known. Captains of commerce, giants of industry, professors of learning—all were there. I felt gratitude for their charitable benevolence. Then my eyes rested on a brass placard which was different—it contained no name. One word, and one word only, was inscribed: "Anonymous." I smiled and wondered who the unnamed contributor could have been. Surely he or she experienced a quiet joy unknown to any other.

"Tell no man"

My thoughts turned backward in time—back to the Holy Land; back to Him whom we especially remember this Easter Sunday; back to Him who

redeemed from the grave all mankind; back to Him who on that special mountain taught His disciples the true spirit of giving when he counseled, "Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them. . . .

"But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth" (Matthew 6:1, 3).

Then, as though to indelibly impress on their souls the practical application of this sacred truth, He came down from the mountain with a great multitude following Him. "And, behold, there came a leper and worshipped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.

"And Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.

"And Jesus saith unto him, See thou tell no man" (Matthew 8:2-4). The word *anonymous* had a precious meaning then. It still has.

"Shan't know who sends it"

The classics of literature, as well as the words from holy writ, teach us the endurance of anonymity. A favorite of mine is Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol." I can picture the trembling Ebenezer Scrooge seeing in vision the return of his former partner, Jacob Marley, though Jacob had been dead for seven years. The words of

Marley penetrate my very soul, as he laments, "Not to know that any Christian spirit working kindly in its little sphere, whatever it may be, will find its mortal life too short for its vast means of usefulness. Not to know that no space of regret can make amends for one life's opportunity misused! Yet such was I!" ("A Christmas Carol," in *The Best Short Stories of Charles Dickens* [New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1947], p. 435).

After a fretful night—wherein Scrooge was shown by the Ghost of Christmas Past, the Ghost of Christmas Present, and the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come the true meaning of living, loving, and giving—he awakened to discover anew the freshness of life, the power of love, and the spirit of a true gift. He remembered the plight of the Bob Cratchit family, arranged with a lad to purchase the giant turkey (the size of a boy), and sent the gift to the Cratchits. Then, with supreme joy, the reborn Ebenezer Scrooge exclaims to himself, "He shan't know who sends it" ("A Christmas Carol," p. 481). Again the word *anonymous*.

Lessons from the *Lusitania* and Potomac River accidents

The sands flow through the hourglass, the clock of history moves on; yet the divine truth prevails undiminished, undiluted, unchanged.

When the magnificent ocean liner *Lusitania* plunged to the bottom of the Atlantic, many lives were lost with the vessel. Unknown are many deeds of valor performed by those who perished. One man who went down with the *Lusitania* gave his life preserver to a woman, though he could not swim a stroke. It didn't really matter that he was Alfred Vanderbilt, the American multimillionaire. He did not give of worldly treasure; he gave his life. Said Emerson, "Rings and other jewels are not gifts, but apologies for gifts. The only gift is a portion of thyself" ("Gifts," in *The Complete Writings of*

Ralph Waldo Emerson [New York: Wm. H. Wise and Co., 1929], p. 286).

A year ago last winter, a modern jetliner faltered after takeoff and plunged into the icy Potomac River. Acts of bravery and feats of heroism were in evidence that day, the most dramatic of which was one witnessed by the pilot of a rescue helicopter. The rescue rope was lowered to a struggling survivor. Rather than grasping the lifeline to safety, the man tied the line to another, who was then lifted to safety. The rope was lowered again, and yet another was saved. Five were rescued from the icy waters. Among them was not found the anonymous hero. Unknown by name, "he left the vivid air signed with his honor" (Stephen Spender, "I think continually of those—" in *Masterpieces of Religious Verse*, ed. James Dalton Morrison [New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers], p. 291).

Three examples from daily lives

It is not only in dying that one can show forth the true gift. Opportunities abound in our daily lives to demonstrate our adherence to the Master's lesson. Let me share in capsule form just three:

1. On a winter's morn, a father quietly awakened his two sons and whispered to them, "Boys, it snowed last night. Get dressed, and we'll shovel the snow from our neighbors' walks before daylight."

The party of three, dressed warmly, and under cover of darkness, cleared the snow from the approaches to several homes. Father had given but one instruction to the boys: "Make no noise, and they will not know who helped them." Again, the word *anonymous*.

2. At a nursing home in our valley, two young men prepared the sacrament. While doing so, an elderly patient in a wheelchair spoke aloud the words, "I'm cold." Without a moment's hesitation, one of the lads walked over to her, removed his own

jacket, placed it about the patient's shoulders, gave her a loving pat on the arm, and then returned to the sacrament table. The sacred emblems were then blessed and passed to the assembled patients.

Following the meeting, I said to the young man, "What you did here today I shall long remember."

He replied, "I worried that without my jacket I would not be properly dressed to bless the sacrament."

I responded, "Never was one more properly dressed for such an occasion than were you."

I know not his name. He remains anonymous.

3. In far-off Europe, beyond a curtain of iron and a wall called "Berlin," I visited, with a handful of members, a small cemetery. It was a dark night, and a cold rain had been falling throughout the entire day.

We had come to visit the grave of a missionary who many years before had died while in the service of the Lord. A hushed silence shrouded the scene as we gathered about the grave. With a flashlight illuminating the headstone, I read the inscription:

Joseph A. Ott

Born: 12 December 1870—
Virgin, Utah

Died: 10 January 1896—
Dresden, Germany

Then the light revealed that this grave was unlike any other in the cemetery. The marble headstone had been polished, weeds such as those which covered other graves had been carefully removed, and in their place was an immaculately edged bit of lawn and some beautiful flowers that told of tender and loving care. I asked, "Who has made this grave so attractive?" My query was met by silence.

At last a twelve-year-old deacon acknowledged that he wanted to render this unheralded kindness and, without prompting from parents or leaders, had done so. He said that he just wanted to do something for a missionary who gave his life while in the service of the Lord. I thanked him; and then I asked

all there to safeguard his secret, that his gift might remain anonymous.

John Weightman's dream

Perhaps no one in my reading has portrayed this teaching of the Master quite so memorably or so beautifully as Henry Van Dyke in his never-to-be-forgotten "The Mansion." In this classic is featured one John Weightman, a man of means, a dispenser of political power, a successful citizen. His philosophy toward giving can be gained from his own statement: "Of course you have to be careful how you give, in order to secure the best results—no indiscriminate giving—no pennies in beggars' hats! . . . Try to put your gifts where they can be identified and do good all around" (*Unknown Quantity: A Book of Romance and Some Half-told Tales* [New York: Scribner's, 1918], pp. 337, 339).

One evening, John Weightman sat in his comfortable chair at his library table and perused the papers before him spread. There were descriptions and pictures of the Weightman wing of the hospital and the Weightman Chair of Political Jurisprudence, as well as an account of the opening of the Weightman Grammar School. John Weightman felt satisfied.

He picked up the family Bible which lay on the table, turned to a passage and read to himself the words: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

"But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven" (Matthew 6:19–20).

The book seemed to float away from him. He leaned forward upon the table, his head resting on his folded hands. He slipped into a deep sleep.

In his dream, John Weightman was transported to the Heavenly City. A guide met him and others whom he had known in life and advised that he would conduct them to their heavenly homes.

The group paused before a beautiful mansion and heard the guide say, "This is the home for you, Dr. McLean. Go in; there is no more sickness here, no more death, nor sorrow, nor pain; for your old enemies are all conquered. But all the good that you have done for others, all the help that you have given, all the comfort that you have brought, all the strength and love that you bestowed upon the suffering, are here; for we have built them all into this mansion for you" (*Unknown Quantity: A Book of Romance and Some Half-told Tales*, pp. 361-62).

A devoted husband of an invalid wife was shown a lovely mansion, as were a mother, early widowed, who reared an outstanding family, and a paralyzed young woman who had lain for thirty years upon her bed—helpless but not hopeless—succeeding by a miracle of courage in her single aim: never to complain, but always to impart a bit of her joy and peace to everyone who came near her.

By this time, John Weightman was impatient to see what mansion awaited him. As he and the Keeper of the Gate walked on, the homes became smaller—then smaller. At last they stood in the middle of a dreary field and beheld a hut, hardly big enough for a shepherd's shelter. Said the guide, "This is your mansion, John Weightman."

In desperation, John Weightman argued, "Have you not heard that I have built a schoolhouse; a wing of a hospital; . . . three . . . churches?"

"Wait," the guide cautioned. ". . . They were not ill done. But they were all marked and used as foundations for the name and mansion of John Weightman in the world. . . . Verily, you have had your reward for them. Would you be paid twice?"

A sadder but wiser John Weightman spoke more lowly: "What is it that counts here?"

Came the reply, "Only that which is truly given. Only that good which is done for the love of doing it. Only those plans in which the welfare of oth-

ers is the master thought. Only those labors in which the sacrifice is greater than the reward. Only those gifts in which the giver forgets himself" ("The Mansion," pp. 364-68).

John Weightman was awakened by the sound of the clock chiming the hour of seven. He had slept the night through. As it turned out, he yet had a life to live, love to share, and gifts to give. Oh, may we remember that—

A bell is no bell till you ring it,
A song is no song till you sing it,
And love in your heart wasn't put
there to stay,
Love isn't love till you give it
away.

(Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein 2nd, "Sixteen Going on Seventeen.")

Service known to God

May this truth guide our lives. May we look upward as we press forward in the service of our God and our fellowmen. And may we incline an ear toward Galilee, that we might hear perhaps an echo of the Savior's teachings: "Do not your alms before men, to be seen of them" (Matthew 6:1). "Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth" (Matthew 6:3). And of our good deeds: "See thou tell no man" (Matthew 8:4). Our hearts will then be lighter, our lives brighter, and our souls richer.

Loving service anonymously given may be unknown to man—but the gift and the giver are known to God. Of this truth I testify, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The Choir sang "Let Zion in Her Beauty Rise" without announcement.

President Hinckley

We have listened to Elder Thomas S. Monson, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, followed by the Tabernacle Choir singing "Let Zion in Her Beauty Rise."

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "Redeemer of Israel."

The Choir and congregation sang "Redeemer of Israel."

President Hinckley

To those of the television and radio audience who have just joined us,

we are convened in the historic Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, in this fourth session of the 153rd Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It is a glorious Easter morning.

Elder F. Burton Howard, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will now address us. He will be followed by Bishop Victor L. Brown, Presiding Bishop of the Church.

Elder F. Burton Howard

Are we like crystal goblets?

Let me ask each of you to picture two crystal goblets in your mind. They differ in size and shape. They are both of good quality and have been well used. One has been carefully kept in a china cupboard. It is clean and polished. It is warm and inviting in appearance. It sparkles in the light and is filled with clear water.

The other glass is coated with grime. It has not been in the dishpan for a long time. It has been used for purposes other than those for which it was made. Most recently it has been left outside in the weather and has served as a flowerpot. Although the flower is gone, it is still filled with dirt. It is dull and unbecoming in the light.

Is not each of us like a crystal glass? We vary in size and shape. Some of us radiate a special spirit. Some are dull and uninviting. Some fill the measure of their creation. Others do not. Each is filled with the accumulated experiences or debris of a lifetime.

Some contain mostly good things—clean thoughts, faith, and Christian service. These hold wisdom and peace. Others enclose dark and secret things. Over time they have filled with unclean thoughts, selfishness, and

sloth. They often hold doubt, contention, and unrest.

Look within to find peace

Many know they are not living up to their potential but for various reasons have procrastinated making changes in their lives. Some long for they know not what and spend their lives in a haphazard pursuit of happiness.

These, in a way, are like the crystal goblet which spent part of its existence filled with dirt. They sense that there is a higher purpose to things. They become dissatisfied and begin to search for meaning. First they look outside themselves. They sample the pleasures of the world. As they do they discover, much as did the snail who set out to look for its house, that after arriving at wherever they were going, they are no closer than before to the object of their search.

Ultimately, they look within. They have really known all the time that this was where to find peace. Sin, you see, is not just a state of mind. Wickedness never was and never will be happiness. (See Alma 41:10.) They discover that if they are not righteous they can never be happy. (See 2 Nephi 2:13.) They resolve to change. Then they are confronted, figuratively, with

the problem of how to turn a weathered flowerpot into a sparkling crystal goblet. Questions are asked: Can I ever be forgiven? Is it really worth the effort? Where do I begin?

In the case of the glass it is easy to understand what to do. We begin by recognizing a better use for the crystal. A convenient place for dumping the unwanted contents is selected. The dirt is left there. The goblet is carefully washed with high quality detergent to remove the stains and residue. It is lovingly polished and placed once again in the company of other crystal glasses in the china cupboard. It is put back into use and cared for regularly.

There is a similar process whereby men and women are purified. The misuse of their lives is forgotten, and they are renewed and changed. This principle, of course, is repentance. When accompanied by authorized baptism, it provides not only an initial cleansing but an ongoing remission of sins as well. Participating in this purifying process is perhaps the most thrilling and important thing we can ever do. It has far-reaching, even eternal, consequences. Of more immediate interest, however, the rewards of repentance are peace and forgiveness in this present life.

An illustration of repentance

Let me illustrate what all of this means. A few years ago I was asked to speak to a group of young men. I don't remember now exactly what was said, except that near the end I made the statement that no one, but no one, present had done anything for which he could not be forgiven.

After the meeting was over one of them came up to me and said, "I just have to talk to you." Inasmuch as I soon had another appointment, I asked if it could wait or if someone else could answer his question. He replied that he had already waited many years and that it was very important to him.

So taking advantage of the few minutes available, we found a little un-

used classroom, went in, and closed the door. "Did you really mean it? Did you?" he asked.

"Mean what?" I said.

"The part about how none of us had done anything that could not be forgiven," he replied.

"Of course I did," I said.

Through his tears his story came. He was of goodly parents. All of his life his mother had told him that he was going on a mission. Before he turned nineteen he was involved in serious transgression. He didn't know how to tell his parents. He knew it would break their hearts. He knew that he wasn't worthy to serve a mission. In desperation, he began to look for an excuse not to go. He decided to take up smoking. He felt that his father could understand that better and would not probe for the real reason. Smoking would hurt his parents, he rationalized, but not as deeply as the truth.

He soon found, however, that the bishop wasn't put off by his use of tobacco. The bishop told him to just stop it and go on a mission anyway. So to get away from the bishop, he entered the military service. There he fell under the influence of some good Latter-day Saints. He stopped smoking. He was able to avoid major temptations. He served his time, received an honorable discharge, and returned home.

There was only one problem. He felt guilty. He had run away from a mission. He had run from the Lord and sensed somehow that gnawing discontent which comes when men do not live up to the purpose of their creation.

"So there you have it," he said. "I have not sinned again. I have attended my meetings. I keep the Word of Wisdom. Why is it that life seems empty? Why do I feel somehow that the Lord is displeased with me? How can I know for sure I have been forgiven?"

"Tell me what you know about repentance," I said.

He had obviously done some reading on the subject. He spoke of

recognition, remorse, and restitution. He had resolved never to sin again.

"Let's see just how those principles apply to you," I said. "Let's begin with recognition. What is the best indicator that someone recognizes he has done wrong?"

"He will admit it," was his reply.

"To whom?" I asked.

He was thoughtful. "To himself, I guess."

"Men sometimes view themselves in a most favorable light," I said. "Wouldn't better evidence of awareness of wrongdoing be to tell someone else?"

"Yes, of course," he answered.

"Who else?" I insisted.

"Why, the person wronged," he said, "and . . . and maybe the bishop."

"Have you done this?" I asked.

"Not until now," he replied. "I've never told it all to anyone but you."

"Maybe that is why you have not ever felt completely forgiven," I responded.

He didn't say much.

"Let's look at the next step," I said. "What does it mean to feel remorse?"

"It means to be sorry," he answered.

"Are you sorry?" I asked.

"Oh yes," he said. "I feel as if I had wasted half my life." And his eyes filled again with tears.

"How sorry should you be?"

He looked puzzled. "What do you mean?"

I said, "Well, in order to be forgiven, a transgressor must experience godly sorrow. (See 2 Corinthians 7:10.) He must have anguish of soul and genuine regret. This sorrow must be strong enough and long enough to motivate the additional processes of repentance, or it is not deep enough. Regret must be great enough so as to bring forth a changed person. That person must demonstrate that he is different than before by doing different and

better things. Have you been sorry enough?" I asked again.

He hesitated. "I've changed," he said. "I'm not the same as I was before. I keep all the commandments now. I would like somehow to make it up to my parents. I have prayed for forgiveness. I apologized to the person I wronged. I realize the seriousness of what I have done. I would give anything if it hadn't happened. Maybe I haven't been as good as I could be, but I don't know what else to do. But I didn't ever confess to anyone."

I said, "I think after this meeting we can say you have even done that."

Forgiveness—the easy part

Then he said, "But after all of that, how can I ever know the Lord has really forgiven me?"

"That is the easy part," I replied. "When you have fully repented, you feel an inner peace. You know somehow you are forgiven because the burden you have carried for so long, all of a sudden isn't there anymore. It is *gone* and *you know* it is gone."

He seemed doubtful still.

"I wouldn't be surprised," I said, "if when you leave this room, you discover that you have left much of your concern in here. If you have fully repented, the relief and the peace you feel will be so noticeable that it will be a witness to you that the Lord has forgiven you. If not today, I think it will happen soon."

I was late for my meeting. I opened the door and we went out together. I didn't know if we would ever meet again. The following Sunday evening, I received a telephone call at my home. It was from the young man.

"Brother Howard, how did you know?"

"How did I know what?" I asked.

"How did you know I would feel good about myself for the first time in five years?"

"Because the Lord promised he would remember no more," I said. (See Hebrews 8:12.)

Then came the question: "Do you think the Church could use a twenty-four-year-old missionary? If they could, I would sure like to go."

Not a free gift

Well, that young man was like one of the glasses we spoke about. He had been out in the world and was partially filled with the wrong things. He was not content. Sin had clouded his vision and interfered with his potential. Until he could find a way to repent, he could never become what he knew he should be. It took time to change. It took prayer. It took effort, and it took help.

My young friend discovered that repentance is often a lonely, silent struggle. It is not a once-in-a-lifetime thing; rather, it lasts a lifetime. As President Stephen L. Richards once said, it is an "ever-recurring acknowledgement of weakness and error and [a] seeking and living for the higher and better" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1956, p. 91).

This young man came to know that repentance is not a free gift. Just as faith without works is dead (see James 2:17)—so repentance, too, demands much. It is not for the fainthearted or the lazy. It requires a complete turning away from wrongdoing and a set of new works or doings which produce a new heart and a different man. Repentance means work. It is not just stopping doing something. It is not just recognizing the wrong or knowing what should be done. It is not "a cycle of sinning and repenting and sinning again" (Hugh B. Brown, *Eternal Quest* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1956], p. 102).

It is not only remorse; rather, it is an eternal principle which, when properly applied over sufficient time, always results in renewal, cleansing, and change.

Repentance indispensable to free agency

The young man we have spoken about discovered that where sin is so serious as to jeopardize one's fellowship in the Church, the sinner must be willing to submit to the jurisdiction and judgment of the person who holds the custody of his Church membership and request forgiveness of him as well.

Most important of all, he learned that repentance is an indispensable counterpart to free agency. Free agency in the plan of salvation contemplates that men and women are free to choose the direction of their lives for themselves. Repentance means that as imperfect beings sometimes make imperfect decisions, they may correct their course. By following the rules of repentance, and through the atonement of Jesus Christ, mistakes don't count. The Lord agrees to "remember no more" (Hebrews 8:12). Because of the miraculous gift of forgiveness, transgressions are forgiven—and forgotten. Men can be cleansed and return to the path of purpose and progress and peace.

By repenting, my young friend became a new person. He was born again of the Spirit. He came to understand for himself, and that is the important thing, the meaning of the Savior's words: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). I so testify, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

We have just listened to Elder F. Burton Howard, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

We shall now hear from Bishop Victor L. Brown, Presiding Bishop of the Church.

Bishop Victor L. Brown

Finding one's identity

The other day a letter arrived from a friend of mine, a young Italian doctor specializing in thoracic surgery. I met him in Milan approximately two years ago, a few months after he had joined the Church. He is a fine, wonderful, clean-cut young man, the kind any parent would be proud of. He was living a good life. He thought he had no needs that were not being met—until he found the gospel of Jesus Christ. I should like to share from his letter a few thoughts having to do with his feelings about himself.

"Without those two elders, my life could have been happy, full of satisfaction, but lacking all the benefits of love, faith, truth, knowledge, freedom, all the things coming only from God, our Heavenly Father, through his Son, Jesus Christ.

"As a child of God, I am glad to live at this time on the earth. Aware of the plan of salvation and of the great 'blessings I can receive upon my head' (see Proverbs 10:6), I am trying to do my best to fulfill the assignments which our Father gave me before sending me here on the earth.

"I am filled with wonderful feelings now that my parents have joined the Church. Our lives are greatly changed and our hearts are willing to do what our Father in Heaven wants us to accomplish."

This wonderful young man has now achieved an awareness of his own identity which so many people, young and old, are hungering for. Finding one's own, intimate identity can be a great blessing in the life of every human being. Everyone can obtain it if he realizes it comes only through the light of truth or, as explained by the Savior, the light of life. In John 8:12 we read, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

Relationship between self-worth and self-subordination

As we endeavor to understand what it means to have the light of life, which is a most important aid to discovering our identity, we must of necessity know who Jesus is. From the holy scriptures, we are told who he is—the Son of God, referred to as the Only Begotten of the Father in the flesh. He was born of Mary. He is our Redeemer through whom repentance and forgiveness of sin are made possible. He it is who was condemned to die and even while hanging on the cross forgave his executioners. He is the same who rose from the tomb and by that act broke the bonds of death for all mankind, establishing the resurrection. This is the same Jesus who guides his church in these latter days, which church carries his name, even The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Through direct teachings during his mortal life and through instruction given to both ancient and modern prophets which are found recorded in the sacred scriptures, the Savior left all mankind sufficient teachings for each one to understand himself and to find his own, true identity. It comes only through knowledge of and obedience to the commandments. Once it does come, the thoughts, "I'm not worth anything—I'm just a nobody," will have no place in our lives. By "true identity" I mean the relationship between self-worth and self-subordination. The quest for this is explained in the words of George T. Boyd in a talk he gave some years ago.

"Scripture reading enables [man] to see life, not alone from the human point of view, but in some degree from God's.

"This perspective fills two of man's important needs—a sense of individual worth and a feeling of self-subordination. Either of these is

achievable alone. But how easy it is for a sense of personal worth to turn to an intolerable egoism and self-conceit—or a sense of self-subordination—to turn into a false humility or morbid self-depreciation.

"In the scriptures man finds that he belongs to a whole, of which God is a part. Belonging to such a whole gives him a sense of the value of his own soul, but seen in relation to God reveals his dependence and hence his subordination. . . . Thus, a devout use of the scriptures nourishes the spiritual life with a calm that displaces the doubts and anxieties which paralyze mankind" (*Views on Man and Religion*, ed. James Allen et al. [Provo, Utah: Friends of George T. Boyd, 1979], p. 207).

Unique human characteristics

In Psalm 8:4 the question is asked: "What is man, that thou art mindful of him?"

The answer, beautifully and clearly stated, follows:

"Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.

"Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet" (Psalm 8:5-6). Thus we come to realize that we are to have dominion over all the other creations of God. In this capacity we have been given characteristics which are unique to the human race. Among them—

1. We have an awareness of our own personality and the ability to strive for self-realization.

2. We have the ability to extend our knowledge, to become aware of the nature of humanity and the nature of things about us.

3. We have the power of abstract reasoning by which we can compare facts and determine the relationship between them and their relevance in our lives.

4. We have the ability and the right to make choices. This is one of the greatest gifts of God to us.

5. We have a will to master. By this power, we can control thoughts, emotions, appetites, and passions.

6. We have a right to worship God and can seek power from him to fulfill our destiny.

Confusion in materialistic world

With this unique capability and emphasis on the worth of souls in the sight of God also comes the opportunity for confusion. We live in a materialistic world. Some become confused and seek identity through riches or the accolades of men. The Savior makes it very clear in his teachings that it is not possible to realize the identity of which I speak through such means. In Luke 18:18-25 we read:

"And a certain ruler asked him, saying, Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

"And Jesus said unto him, . . .

"Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother.

"And he said, All these have I kept from my youth up.

"Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me.

"And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful: for he was very rich.

"And when Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful, he said, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!

"For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God."

It was not that the man was rich but that he coveted his riches and would not share his wealth with the poor.

Another example is also recorded in Luke:

"And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully:

"And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?

"And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods.

"And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.

"But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?

"So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God" (Luke 12:16-21).

Example of proper balance

Contrast these with the story of a sixteen-year-old priest who answered the telephone one day to hear the voice of a popular disc jockey on a local radio station. He was asked a question and when he answered it correctly was informed he had won an expensive sports car. It seemed like a dream come true for a teenage boy. A loving bishop was concerned about what such a car might do to the boy, thinking it might draw him away from all we hold dear. He asked him about his feelings. The bishop could hardly believe his ears when the young man indicated he was not going to take the car but would accept a cash award instead. He said, "Now my mission is paid for." What an outstanding example of proper balance in an attitude toward worldly wealth or recognition and Christlike values.

Example of struggle for self-worth

I am acquainted with another young man who struggled to achieve this balance. He had received tremen-

dous recognition as an athlete. He started swimming competitively at age thirteen and would practice upward of thirty hours every week. He became a national champion and winner of a bronze medal at the 1968 Olympic Games. He was an All-American in college for three years. After graduation he went on to medical school and did very well.

During all this time, he had excluded himself from any spiritual association and had little warmth toward people less fortunate or less talented than he. He was struggling for a real feeling of self-worth. In his own words: "I would tell myself, 'You are an Olympian. You have a good mind, you will become a doctor and have the good life.' I would tell myself this as I was contemplating suicide. I was full of false and vain pride."

Fortunately, during his senior year at medical school, he went to live with a country doctor who understood the struggles he was having. With the encouragement of his older mentor, he began to read the scriptures. At first, he did so with arrogance, confident that intellectually he could understand all he read, which he found he could not do. Again in his own words: "I was halfway through Genesis and was learning very little when I said to myself, 'There must be chapters that are written in a way that will be easier to understand.' I turned to Numbers and found that I understood even less."

Finally, he pursued his studies in the right spirit, wanting to learn and to feel. Slowly, as he prayed and studied and prayed some more, he began to realize that he was a child of a loving Father in Heaven and as such had tremendous potential as an individual. He accepted the Savior's counsel to build our lives upon a foundation of rock:

"Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

"And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and

beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

"And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:

"And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it" (Matthew 7:24-27).

Find identity as children of light

My brothers and sisters, I hope that we might always accept the Savior's challenge to us to build upon rock rather than sand and to "walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.

"While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light" (John 12:35-36).

I bear you my testimony that we can only find individual identity and happiness as children of light, possessing the light of life as found through following the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth, for it was he who said, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness" (John 8:12). In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The Choir sang "Almighty God of Our Fathers" without announcement.

President Hinckley

Bishop Victor L. Brown, Presiding Bishop of the Church, has addressed us, followed by the Tabernacle Choir singing "Almighty God of Our Fathers."

Elder Mark E. Petersen of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will now address us. He will be our concluding speaker.

Elder Mark E. Petersen

True meaning of Easter

Springtime always brings Easter, and Easter turns our minds to Jesus Christ, our Savior.

It was He who was born in Bethlehem, the Son of God, the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6), who holds out the promise of goodwill to all mankind.

It was He who gave us the true meaning of Easter through His glorious resurrection, with the assurance of everlasting life. Think of it! Everlasting life!

When He was born, He was called Jesus because He would save His people from their sins. But He also was Immanuel (Isaiah 7:14), meaning "God with us."

How appropriate that name, for He was God, and indeed He came into

the world to be with us. "God with us"! This He was in fact. He was deity before he was born into mortality, and He was His divine self while on the earth. He did not change His identity. He forever remains the Son of God, our Redeemer and our Savior.

The Atonement

He died on the cross to atone for the sins of all who will obey Him, and He broke the bands of death to provide a resurrection for us all.

His atonement was the most important event that ever happened. The creation of this earth, the establishment of the Twelve Tribes of Israel, and the labors of the great patriarchs and prophets—all were prelude to His achievement on Calvary.

Offerings were burned on the altars of Israel throughout Old Testament times in symbolic anticipation of the great sacrifice of Him who was called the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Revelation 13:8).

Necessity for a physical earth

As Jehovah of the premortal life, Jesus was the central figure in making the primeval arrangements for the mortal existence of the human race.

It was He who volunteered to die for us. It was He who gave all honor to our Heavenly Father. It was He who became the author of eternal salvation "unto all them that obey him" (Hebrews 5:9).

As the Apostle Peter said, "There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

Much advance preparation was required for His atonement, even before He was born in the flesh. For one thing, an earth was required on which we, the children of God, could live during our mortal existence.

Of necessity that earth must be physical in nature, for we who were to live on it would be physical beings, such as we now are. It had to be a physical earth also on which the Savior could live out His mortal life.

His existence in Palestine was to be physical, in a body of flesh and bones like our own. On this earth He would endure the physical suffering of crucifixion. He would die physically, and then—how glorious it was—He would bring about a physical resurrection.

Therefore, a physical earth was essential to His mission. There was nothing ethereal about His work here on earth. It was not to be accomplished in some intangible or mystical way.

His life on earth was real and physical. His death was real and physical, as was His resurrection, all taking place on this very real and physical planet. It fully demonstrated His genuine reality as a physical being.

When plans for His atonement were made in the primeval councils in heaven, a portion of that planning centered on the creation of this particular earth, for it would require an act of divine architecture, followed by a process of physical construction.

Without this earth, could Christ have been born to Mary in Bethlehem? Could He have died on the cross in Jerusalem? Could He have been resurrected from the tomb?

Without this earth, would there have been Roman soldiers to nail Him to the cross and afterward to guard His tomb?

Could He have manifested Himself physically to His disciples as proof of His resurrection?

Would "the other" Mary have been in the garden on that first Easter morning (Matthew 28:1) to hear the angel say: "*He is not here: for he is risen*"? (Matthew 28:6).

The destiny of this earth

The special creation of this earth was a vital part of the plan of salvation. It had a particular purpose. It was no afterthought. Neither was it an accident of any proportion, nor a spontaneous development of any kind.

It was the result of deliberate, advance planning and purposeful creation. The Divine Architect devised it. The Almighty Creator made it and assigned to it a particular mission.

This earth was not designed merely as a home for mortals, however. Not at all. It has a greater destiny than that. This earth will not remain in its present condition. It is to become immortal. It will pass through a refining process by which it will become a celestial globe and be like a Urim and Thummim in the skies. (See D&C 130:9.) That will require further acts of divine creation, and, of course, ordinary common sense tells us that no spontaneous accident could produce a change like that.

The Savior will reside here when the earth is celestialized, and His Fa-

ther will visit it from time to time. It then will be the eternal home of those who achieve celestial glory in the kingdom of God.

Such is the final destiny of the earth. Such was the purpose God had in mind in creating it, for He planned it so in the beginning.

The Creator of the earth

Do we appreciate what this earth really means to us? Do we see why it was made? Do we understand its purpose? Do we see that there was nothing accidental or spontaneous about its origin? Do we see that its creation was literally and truly, completely and exclusively, an act of God?

And who was the Creator?

Our Heavenly Father declares that it was His own Beloved Son who accomplished the mighty task.

"All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made," said the Apostle John (John 1:3).

"By him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:

"And he is before all things, and by him all things consist" (Colossians 1:16-17). So said the Apostle Paul.

The Almighty also affirmed it when he told Moses: "Worlds without number have I created; and I also created them for mine own purpose; and by the Son I created them, which is mine Only Begotten" (Moses 1:33; italics added).

Christ also taught that He Himself was the Creator. Said He to the Prophet Joseph Smith: "Behold, I am Jesus Christ . . . who created the heavens and the earth" (D&C 14:9).

Man created in God's and Christ's image

One of our most touching and impressive revelations of the Savior is

provided in the Book of Ether, where the appearance of the Lord to the brother of Jared is recorded. I quote briefly from it. Said the Savior to the brother of Jared:

"Behold, I am he who was prepared from the foundation of the world to redeem my people. Behold, I am Jesus Christ. . . .

"Never have I shown myself unto man whom I created, for never has man believed in me as thou hast. Seest thou that ye are created after mine own image? Yea, even all men were created in the beginning after mine own image. . . .

"This body, which ye now behold, is the body of my spirit; and *man have I created* after the body of my spirit; and even as I appear unto thee to be in the spirit will I appear unto my people in the flesh" (Ether 3:14-16; italics added).

There we have it in His own words! The glorious, irrefutable truth! Christ is the Creator! Shall we not accept His word in preference to uninspired theories of men?

The Creator and Savior

Probably the greatest challenge to belief in Christ today is the fast-spreading denial that He is the Creator, coming from men who would supplant the revealed truth with the very tenuous and fragile theory that the universe and all life came about in some mysterious, spontaneous, accidental manner.

To deny that He is the Creator is to deny also that He is the Christ.

To deny that He is the Creator is to deny that He can save us from our sins.

To deny that He is the Creator is to deny that He broke the bands of death. It is to reject the fact of the Resurrection.

To deny that He is the Creator is to deny that He wrought out an atonement on the cross at Calvary.

To deny that He is the Creator is to reject His gospel and the true Christian religion.

But He is the Creator! He is the Redeemer! He is the Savior of the world! He did accomplish His atonement on Calvary, and He did bring about the Resurrection. This we know by the revelation of God! His gospel is true and we love it, and we love Him and deem it a privilege to serve Him!

Testimony of our Heavenly Father

Can anyone ask for a plainer definition of creation and the purpose of life than is given in our scriptures?

We even have the word of our Eternal Heavenly Father. He bore testimony that Jesus Christ is His Beloved Son and in addition declared that He is very well pleased with Him. (See Matthew 3:17.)

He not only affirmed that Christ created the worlds, but, after each step in creation, did He not say that the work was well done?

When the waters and the firmament were put in position, "God saw that it was good." When life was placed on the earth, "God saw that it was good," and when creation was finished, "God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, *it was very good.*" (See Genesis 1:10-31; italics added.)

The Father is a God of truth, and He said that the Savior is "full of grace and truth" (Moses 1:6). Then dare we disbelieve Him or reject His words? The Savior did the work of creation, and the Father was well pleased with Him! Then should we not be pleased to accept Him and serve Him?

The Father repeatedly expressed His satisfaction with the ministry of His Son. Did He not so speak at the baptism of Christ? "This is my beloved Son, *in whom I am well pleased*" (Matthew 3:17; italics added).

Did He not repeat it on the Mount of Transfiguration? "This is my beloved Son, *in whom I am well pleased*" (Matthew 17:5; italics added).

Did He not introduce the Savior to the Nephites with the same expression? "Behold my Beloved Son, *in whom I am well pleased*" (3 Nephi 11:7; italics added).

And when He appeared to the boy Joseph Smith, did He not give His Beloved Son another positive endorsement?

Isn't the testimony of our Eternal Heavenly Father sufficient to erase all doubt from the human mind? It is He who declared that Jesus is His Son and that He did all things well.

Easter means Christ

Then what is our faith?

It is that God is our Heavenly Father and that through the gospel we may become like Him and live with Him.

It is that Jesus of Nazareth is His Son and our Savior.

It is that the Savior indeed was the creator of heaven and earth, and that He is the Divine Pattern after whom we should fashion our lives.

Therefore, let us follow Him and worship Him in spirit and in truth. He holds out a warm invitation, and says, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

"Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

"For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:28-30).

When He was born the angels sang.

When He died the heavens wept.

When He broke the bands of death, angels were there to greet Him, and so was Mary. She knew Him and recognized Him as the Christ.

But some doubted.

Shall we be like Mary and believe and accept Him? Or shall we join the doubters and shroud ourselves in the darkness of unbelief?

Jesus is a God of light and life, not a symbol of death and doubt. He

lives, and will save everyone who is willing to serve Him. He is our divine Redeemer and our eternal Creator. He is the resurrection and the life. This is our testimony to the world.

Yes, today is Easter, and to us Easter means Christ—the resurrected Christ, the Son of God, our Creator and our Redeemer. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

That stirring testimony of the risen Lord was given us by Elder Mark E. Petersen of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, who has been our concluding speaker this morning.

We appreciate the courtesies shown by the owners and operators of

the many radio and television stations and cable systems who have offered their facilities as a public service to make the proceedings of this conference available to a large audience throughout many areas of the world.

The Tabernacle Choir will sing in closing "Dedication." The benediction will then be pronounced by Elder Hugh W. Pinnock, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

This conference will then be adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

The Choir sang "Dedication."
Elder Hugh W. Pinnock offered the benediction.

SECOND DAY AFTERNOON MEETING

FIFTH SESSION

The fifth and final general session of the 153rd Annual General Conference commenced at 2:00 P. M. on Sunday, April 3, 1983.

President Ezra Taft Benson, President of the Council of the Twelve, conducted this session.

Music was provided by the Tabernacle Choir directed by Donald Ripplinger with Robert Cundick at the organ.

President Benson made the following remarks at the outset of the meeting:

President Ezra Taft Benson

President Spencer W. Kimball is watching the proceedings of this session on television and I have been assigned to conduct it.

We extend a sincere welcome to all assembled this afternoon in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah in the fifth and concluding session of the 153rd Annual General

Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We also welcome those seated in the Assembly Hall where Elders A. Theodore Tuttle and Yoshihiko Kikuchi preside.

We send our greetings and blessings to members of the Church and many friends everywhere who are participating in these proceedings by radio and television.

The Tabernacle Choir, with Donald Ripplinger directing and Robert Cundick at the organ, is providing the music for this session.

The Choir will begin this service by singing "Awake, Ye Saints of God, Awake!" The invocation will be offered by Elder F. Enzo Busche, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The Choir sang "Awake, Ye Saints of God, Awake!"

Elder F. Enzo Busche offered the invocation.

President Benson

The Tabernacle Choir will now sing "The Lord Is My Shepherd." Following the singing, we shall hear from Elder Boyd K. Packer, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

The Choir sang "The Lord Is My Shepherd."

President Benson

Elder Boyd K. Packer, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will now speak to us.

Elder Boyd K. Packer

Control through freedom

I have a message for parents about the education of your children. Several weeks ago I had in my office a four-star general and his wife; they were very impressive people. They admire the Church because of the conduct of our youth. The general's wife mentioned her children, of whom she is justly proud. But she expressed a deep concern. "Tell me," she said, "how you are able to control your youth and build such character as we have seen in your young men?"

I was interested in her use of the word 'control'. The answer, I told them, centered in the doctrines of the gospel. They were interested; so I spoke briefly of the doctrine of agency. I said we develop *control* by teaching *freedom*. Perhaps at first they thought we start at the wrong end of the subject. A four-star general is nothing if not a disciplinarian. But when one understands the gospel, it becomes very clear that the best control is self-control.

It may seem unusual at first to foster *self-control* by centering on *freedom of choice*, but it is a very sound doctrinal approach.

While either subject may be taught separately, and though they may appear at first to be opposites, they are in fact parts of the same subject.

No true freedom without responsibility

Some who do not understand the doctrinal part do not readily see the relationship between obedience and agency. And they miss one vital connection and see obedience only as restraint. They then resist the very thing that will give them true freedom. There is no true freedom without responsibility, and there is no enduring freedom without a knowledge of the truth. The Lord said, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31-32).

The general quickly understood a truth that is missed even by some in the Church. Latter-day Saints are not obedient because they are compelled to be obedient. They are obedient because they know certain spiritual truths and have decided, as an expression of their own individual agency, to obey the commandments of God.

Obedient because we can see

We are the sons and daughters of God, willing followers, disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, and "under this head are [we] made free" (Mosiah 5:8).

Those who talk of blind obedience may appear to know many things, but they do not understand the doctrines of the gospel. There is an obedi-

ence that comes from a knowledge of the truth that transcends any external form of control. We are not obedient because we are blind, we are obedient because we can see. The best control, I repeat, is self-control.

The general knew then why we teach our children the doctrines of the gospel of Jesus Christ and where they get the resolute determination to protect individual freedom.

Responsibility for teaching the doctrines rests upon parents.

"The glory of God is intelligence, or, in other words, light and truth. Light and truth forsake [the] evil one. . . . I have commanded *you* to bring up *your children* in light and truth" (D&C 93:36, 37, 40; italics added).

If all your children know about the gospel is what you have taught them at home, how safe will they be? Will they reject evil because they choose to reject it?

Teach children moral and spiritual control

As a young man in the military service, I visited the ancient shrine at Nikko Kanko in Japan. There, carved into the facade of a building, are the three monkeys. One with its hands over its ears, another over its eyes, and the third over its mouth. Hear no evil; see no evil; speak no evil! That is easier said than done! It is not easy to foster self-control when the world is teaching indulgence.

Fortunately, there is very substantial help for parents. Unfortunately, some families overlook it.

Several years ago I attended a seminary graduation in Hawaii. A handsome young Hawaiian athlete was being honored. He had been blessed with a well-formed body, and he had excelled in several sports. As athletes often are, he was well known both in and out of the Church. His athletic coaches had trained him for the most part in the coordination of his physical

powers, adding a little on such virtues as determination and courage.

He said it had not been difficult for him to achieve athletically. If he practiced and kept the training rules, the muscles of his body responded as he wished and he had coordination and control.

Then he talked of a control that did not come easy and said: "I found it is easier to control the muscles in my arms and legs than to control the muscles in my tongue. I found it easier to control my eyes on the playing field than on the street. It is not easy to control what I will hear. Most of all, it is not easy to control my thoughts." He then expressed gratitude for the seminary program and paid tribute to his seminary teachers. They were the coaches who taught him control over the most permanent part of his nature.

It is not long before the ability to throw a ball or leap a barrier or lift a weight becomes incidental in life. Physical prowess fades. But moral and spiritual strength can grow stronger as the physical part of us weakens with age.

Rote learning in the gospel

If you want your children to grow spiritually, teach them the doctrines of the gospel.

If you want your son to play the piano, it is good to expose him to music. This may give him a feel for it and help greatly in his learning. But this is not enough. There is the practice and the memorization and the practice and the practice and the practice before he can play it well.

If you want your daughter to learn a language, expose her to those who speak it. She may get a feel for the language, even pick up many words. But this is not enough. She must memorize grammar and vocabulary. She must practice pronunciation. There is rote learning without which she will never speak or write the language fluently.

So it is with the gospel. One may have a feel for it. But some time one must *learn* the doctrine. Here, too, rote learning, practice, memorization, reading, listening, discussion, all become essential. There is no royal road to learning.

Church curriculum centered in scriptures and history of the Church

The Church can help parents because this kind of learning is effectively given in a classroom setting. So we have seminaries, institutes, religion classes; there are priesthood, Sunday School, and auxiliary classes. The curriculum for all of them centers in the scriptures and the history of the Church. Spiritual development is tied very closely to a knowledge of the scriptures, where the doctrines are found.

A school library may hold a world of knowledge. But unless a student knows the system of cataloging, a search for that knowledge will be discouraging; it will be an ordeal. Those systems are really not too difficult to learn. Then all of the knowledge in all of the books is opened to him. Searching becomes very simple indeed. But one must find it and read it. One must *earn* it.

It is so with the scriptures. They contain the fulness of the everlasting gospel, an eternity of knowledge. But one must learn to use them or the search will be discouraging. Again, there is a system. Learn about the concordance, the footnotes, the Topical Guide; memorize the books of the Bible and the Book of Mormon. And the scriptures will then yield their treasure. All of this is taught in the seminary and institute classes. The teachers are both worthy and well trained. But they cannot help if your students are not enrolled.

Seminary and institute classes are foundations

There is a revolution in progress. The silicone chip has changed our future. We move from the Industrial Age to the Age of Information. And schools are tooling up to meet the challenge. Graduation requirements for high schools and entrance requirements for colleges are being tightened up. Elective courses are being reduced in number, and they must be carefully selected.

Without guidance, your student may choose another elective instead of seminary, or another course instead of an institute class. That would surely be a mistake. It would be like adding one more brick to the house of knowledge when there is little mortar to hold it all together. Parents, encourage, even insist, that your students register for seminary or institute. Presidents, bishops, youth leaders, you are responsible to encourage every youngster, without exception, to enroll. Few things you do will benefit them quite as much.

Students, if your values are in place, you will not hesitate to forego an elective class that may decorate your life in favor of instruction which can hold together the very foundation of it. Then, once enrolled, attend, study, and learn. Persuade your friends to do the same. You will never regret it; this I promise you.

Support teachers

Parents, you are greatly indebted to teachers. Somehow you must show it by supporting them. Very few teachers are unworthy of support. If there is a problem, too frequently and all too quickly some parents side with their child against a teacher. As a rule of thumb, we have told our youngsters that disrespect for teachers, in public schools or in Church schools, brings trouble at home as well. This year two hundred thousand students are enrolled in seminary, and over one hundred and twenty thousand in institutes of religion in eighteen languages in sixty-

eight countries. Whether it be released-time, the early-morning, or the home-study programs, the courses are the same. They center in the scriptures; they teach the doctrine and history of the Church.

Some classes are very humble indeed. President Kimball and I once attended a seminary class in North Dakota. We did not meet in a fine room with a blackboard and projector and special school chairs. We met in the very small bedroom in a very small house.

The teacher, Sister Two Dogs, sat on the edge of the bed. The students crowded together on the floor. It was no less a class than one held in a beautiful building. The most important ingredient, the Spirit of the Lord, was there. I attended a seminary graduation in Omaha, Nebraska. The speaker, again a young man, described this experience.

"Each morning I awoke to the sweet voice of my mother calling out, 'John, John, time to get ready for seminary!' The year rolled on and the mornings grew cold and wet and dark; still the happy voice of Mother would sing out, 'John, John, time to get up for seminary!'" Then he added, "I learned to hate that sound!"

But then, choking back the tears, he thanked his mother for what she had given him. And I think only later did he realize that she had to be up first every morning.

How free? How safe?

The temptation your children will face will not come at home nor in the

seminary class. It will come later, when they are away from both teacher and parent. One day you must set them free. When that day comes, how *free* will they be, and how *safe*? It will depend on how much truth they have received. I know of a young missionary who, half a world away from his parents and teachers, faced the testing that comes to young manhood. There, beyond the control of either of them, he made a decision. Later he wrote: "I'm so glad I stayed, because during this last month I found something—I found myself."

I thank God for teachers in the Church, you who have chosen, and have been chosen for, the better part.

In those discouraging hours before immature, disinterested, and sometimes impudent students, may you hear a voice as well. That still, small voice of inspiration whispering, "Teach ye diligently and my grace shall attend you" (D&C 88:78).

The Lord was a teacher. I bear testimony of Him, and pray that He will bless all those who follow in His footsteps to teach the gospel of Jesus Christ. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

Elder Boyd K. Packer, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just spoken to us.

We shall now hear from Elder M. Russell Ballard, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy. He will be followed by Elder Theodore M. Burton, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder M. Russell Ballard

Procedure for preparing Church teaching materials

For the past several years, I have served as Executive Director of the Church Curriculum Department. When I became fully aware of the immense effort required to prepare a

single course of study, I was overwhelmed. I now have much greater appreciation for the approved teaching materials of the Church.

Let me give you an example. The present *Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Supplement*, which was prepared to help teachers teach the New Testa-

ment, was written by a committee of faithful and knowledgeable Church-service writers, who were called and set apart for that service by one of the General Authorities. Their work commenced in the spring of 1980, following General Authority approval of the outline. Writing committee members spent thousands of hours researching, writing, and attending biweekly committee meetings, where the entire committee critiqued each lesson carefully and suggested improvements. The work of the writing committee then was reviewed by General Authority Managing Directors of the Priesthood and Curriculum departments, the General Presidency and the General Board of the Sunday School, Church Editing, and Church Correlation Review. This manual received careful scrutiny at many levels before it was approved for use in Sunday School this year. All teaching materials for the Church follow this same basic procedure in their preparation.

Teach from scriptures and approved teaching materials

Teachers would be well advised to study carefully the scriptures and their manuals before reaching out for supplemental materials. Far too many teachers seem to stray from the approved curriculum materials without fully reviewing them. If teachers feel a need to use some good supplemental resources beyond the scriptures and manuals in presenting a lesson, they should first consider the use of the Church magazines.

Teachers can stay on safe ground when they use the standard works, the approved manuals, and the writings of the General Authorities. Elder Hyrum M. Smith of the Council of the Twelve said, "There is more to be learned in five minutes reading in the Holy Scriptures, more that is worthy of retention in the memory, more that will be helpful if we remember and obey them, than we can find in reading all of the six best sellers in every month in the year" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1917, p. 38).

Strengthen quality of teaching

I believe there is no greater call in the Church than to be an effective teacher. Effective teaching by the Spirit can stir the souls of men with a desire to live the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ more completely.

In each teaching setting, whether it is a family home evening, a class, a sacrament meeting, or a general or stake conference, the teacher should strive to create a heartfelt desire in his students to live worthy of eternal life with our Heavenly Father.

Regarding the need of effective teaching in the Church, President Kimball gave this counsel: "Please take a particular interest in strengthening and improving the quality of teaching in the Church. . . . I fear at times that all too often many of our members come to church, sit through a class or meeting, and then return home having been largely uninformed. . . . We all need to be touched and nurtured by the Spirit, and effective teaching is one of the most important ways this can happen" (*Ensign*, May 1981, p. 45).

A teacher of God's children

The Apostle Paul placed the priority of teachers in the Church next only to the Apostles and the prophets when he said, "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers" (1 Corinthians 12:28).

President Brigham Young used the following story to illustrate the potential influence of teachers: "A traveller in the Eastern country overtook an old gentleman walking towards a town, and asked him, 'Who is the great man of that little town? Who is your leading man? Who is the governor and controlling spirit of that little place?' The old gentleman replied, 'I am the king of that little town.' 'Really,' says the traveller, 'are you the leading man?' 'Yes, sir, I am king in that place, and reign as king.' 'How do you make this to appear? Are you in afflu-

ent circumstances?" "No, I am poor; but in that little village there are so many children. All those children go to my school; I rule the children, and they rule their parents, and that makes me king" (Journal of Discourses, 9:39).

President David O. McKay said, "No greater responsibility can rest upon any man, than to be a teacher of God's children" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1916, p. 57).

Strengthen spirituality and foster faith

May we ask you priesthood leaders who call your members to become teachers to be prayerful and concerned when selecting those who will teach in your stakes, wards, or quorums. Be sure to provide ongoing in-service teacher training. Visit the classrooms on occasion, and express genuine interest in the great cause of teaching. Please do not leave this most important work unattended.

The Lord set the example when he sent Paul to the home of Ananias. The Lord did not leave him to flounder in his newly found faith, but rather, as recorded in the ninth chapter of Acts, Paul received specific training to become a mighty gospel teacher and Apostle.

Should not every teaching setting within the Church be a forum of faith, where the teacher strengthens spirituality and fosters faith in the lives of those being taught?

President J. Reuben Clark's instructions to a group of professional teachers apply to all teachers in the Church. He said, "Your essential and all but sole duty, is to teach the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. . . . You are to teach this Gospel using as your sources and authorities the Standard Works of the Church, and the words of those whom God has called to lead His people in these last days. You are not . . . to intrude into your work your own peculiar philosophy, no matter what its source or how pleasing or rational it seems to you to be" ("The

Charted Course of the Church in Education" [an address delivered at the Brigham Young University Summer School in Aspen Grove, Utah, 8 Aug. 1938, p. 9]).

No greater call than teaching

Jesus chided the Sadducees for their incorrect teachings. He said, "Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God" (Matthew 22:29). The Lord stressed the need for prayerful preparation by teachers, as recorded in the Doctrine and Covenants: "And the Spirit shall be given unto you by the prayer of faith; and if ye receive not the Spirit ye shall not teach" (D&C 42:14).

One of the great teachers in my life, President N. Eldon Tanner, said: "In my opinion no greater call can come to anyone than to be a teacher in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We are all teachers in one way or another, whether we have been called and set apart as such or not" ("Teaching Children of God," *Ensign*, Oct. 1980, p. 2).

Surely no teachers in the Church are more important than fathers and mothers. No classroom is more important than the home. Parents have been commanded to teach their children the gospel. (See D&C 68:25.)

Study, ponder, and pray

My brothers and sisters, I believe that every human soul is teaching something to someone nearly every minute here in mortality. May we consider with great reverence the trust that the Lord has placed in us to "teach one another the doctrine of the kingdom" (D&C 88:77).

May I urge each member of the Church, when you are serving as a teacher, to remember that every human soul is precious to our Father in Heaven, for we are all his children. God's children are entitled to be taught the truths of the gospel in clear and understandable terms so that the

Spirit can confirm the truths of the gospel to them.

My plea to the teachers of the Church is to study, ponder, and pray for guidance in your preparation. Use the scriptures and the approved curriculum materials, teaching with the objective to bless and inspire the lives of those assigned to you. Let us also remember that some of the most effective activation work in the Church is

accomplished by those teachers who reach out to the inactive, loving and teaching them until they are once again in full fellowship with the Saints.

To the Master Teacher, the Lord Jesus Christ, whose resurrection we celebrate at this Easter time, I say: I thank thee, oh Lord, for teaching us that there is no greater call than to be an effective teacher. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Elder Theodore M. Burton

Association with disfellowshipped or excommunicated

I would like to confine my remarks today to the principle of forgiveness as it applies to a person who has been disfellowshipped or excommunicated. By applying this principle we can "succor the weak, lift up the hands which hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees" (D&C 81:5). The most loving action the Church can take at times is to disfellowship or excommunicate a person. This statement may seem incongruous to someone who does not understand the true nature of repentance and forgiveness. And even within the Church, members sometimes have difficulty knowing how they should relate to such a person.

Should I limit my association to protect myself in case the sin is contagious? Should I show my disgust that he or she would commit such a serious transgression, and take my business and friendship elsewhere? Should I act as if nothing had happened, or should I show forth increased interest in that person to demonstrate my love and concern? These are important questions which deserve genuine answers.

Teach principle of forgiveness

I am concerned about this matter, for whatever actions are taken have serious consequences both for the

transgressor and for his well-meaning but sometimes ill-informed associates who may be members of the Church in good standing. I am even more concerned about the attitudes of the victims of transgressions—those who were hurt by the transgressor's actions.

For an appropriate example, I look to my own grandchildren. Occasionally they quarrel or speak harshly one to another. But I am amazed and pleased when I observe how quickly the victim of a harsh word or action forgives and forgets. I am delighted that the offender is soon welcomed back into the fold of love by his brothers and sisters. Mother and father teach the offending child not to give offense again. So the family grows in affection.

If we are going to teach our children the principle of forgiveness, we need to begin with our own lives. We must set our children a good example. In dealing with family or friends, we hurt them when we are selfish or thoughtless. But if we change our ways to avoid giving offense in the future, it is easier to receive forgiveness. Repentance is a change of behavior which invites forgiveness. If father and mother forgive each other quickly and afterward show increased love and consideration for each other, their children will quickly learn to act likewise. Repentance and forgiveness will become standards within that family.

Forgiveness begins in the home

If we learn to forgive one another within the family, we will be able to forgive more readily within the Church and within the community. Like many good things, forgiveness begins in the home. We must remember to teach our children that even if others fail to be kind and considerate, we ought to be slow to condemn and very quick to forgive. We need not be tolerant of sin, but we must become tolerant and forgiving of the sinner. Jesus Christ gave his life to reconcile us to God so that through his atonement we can repent and receive forgiveness of our sins. We owe our Savior a great debt. Part of that debt is the obligation we have to forgive one another.

When Jesus taught the Nephites, he told them: "For, if ye forgive men their trespasses your Heavenly Father will also forgive you;

"But if ye forgive not men their trespasses neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (3 Nephi 13:14-15). That forgiveness which comes from our Heavenly Father is so complete that he will not even call to mind the sins we have committed. His forgiveness is so all-inclusive that the Lord will not even remember those sins. But there is a condition attached to that forgiveness:

"By this ye may know if a man repenteth of his sins—behold, he will confess them and forsake them" (D&C 58:43).

As we plead for mercy, we need to show mercy to others. The injury people do us may appear at the moment to be very great. Yet, just as time heals the wounds of the body, so time also heals the wounds of the soul. As we apply disinfectants to aid in healing the wounds of the body, we need to apply love and understanding in disinfecting the wounds of the soul. To the extent we give forgiveness to others, we can expect to receive forgiveness for ourselves. It is all part of the process of repentance.

Church discipline—a teaching process

My special assignment as a General Authority is to assist the First Presidency in bringing people who have committed serious sins back into the Church. I receive, organize, and summarize information for the First Presidency to use in making decisions. I must read the background material to make certain that all pertinent information is available to them. As I read the heartbreak contained in letters of people pleading for forgiveness, I realize the truth of Alma's statement: "Behold, I say unto you, wickedness never was happiness" (Alma 41:10). My heart goes out to those sufferers in a spirit of forgiveness. And instead of dwelling on the wickedness and grief of those who have sinned, I rejoice to read how many have abandoned their sinful practices and are now on the road back to righteousness and happiness. People can and do change.

When people are disfellowshipped or excommunicated from the Church, it is done not to punish but to help them. Church discipline requires this action, but we should remember that the word *discipline* has the same root as the word *disciple*. A disciple is a student or follower—one who is learning. Church discipline, then, must become a teaching process. When a person is disciplined, he should not be thrust out and abandoned by his associates. It is exactly at that time that we need to show increased love for such people, to teach and show them the way back to God. It is wicked to reject a child of God simply because he made an error. We need to teach him how to start anew, to change evil practices into righteous deeds, and thus to transform his life. With repentance through service to others, he can be reinstated into fellowship or washed clean in the waters of baptism and brought back into the family of God.

An unforgiving attitude not from Christ

To teach people to overcome sin and change their lives for the better is the sum and substance of Christian service. We must do everything in our power to help sinners to change their lives for the better. Otherwise, as the scriptures warn us, we will have to shoulder their sins ourselves. Our obligation is to teach and help them, and the sinner's obligation is to listen and learn. He will have to bear the whole burden himself if he refuses. But regardless of his present attitude, we must never abandon him nor think his reformation is hopeless. There is hope for everyone, and we must never cease trying to help people understand that through the atonement of Jesus Christ not only the sins of mankind in general but also their personal sins can be forgiven.

One thing causes me great concern as I read letters from those who have been injured. I am concerned with the feeling of resentment and hatred some individuals have expressed against the spouse that betrayed or abused them and their children. Occasionally a wife, for example, in a spirit of revenge may attempt to get even with her spouse by sinning in the same manner. But all she does by that tragic action is to destroy herself. Some individuals have expressed such resentment against a former spouse that they write that nothing that spouse could ever do could right the wrong he or she committed. They insist they can *never* forgive a spouse for the pain and suffering that spouse has caused.

A person with that attitude can hardly be called a follower of Jesus Christ. Even of those who were so wicked they crucified their Savior, he said: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). So, when Peter asked the Lord how often he should forgive a person who sinned against him, "Till seven

times?" Jesus answered, "I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven" (Matthew 18:21-22). People can and do change, and our duty is to forgive them.

Rejoice in spirit of forgiveness

Many people bring troubles and difficulties upon themselves by an unforgiving attitude. Hence, in a modern revelation Jesus Christ revealed this great truth:

"Wherefore, I say unto you, that ye ought to forgive one another; for he that forgiveth not his brother his trespasses standeth condemned before the Lord; for there remaineth in him the greater sin" (D&C 64:9). I take that to mean that it is a greater sin to refuse to forgive a person than it is to commit the sin for which that person was dis-fellowshipped or excommunicated. The Lord went on to say, "I, the Lord, will forgive whom I will forgive, but of you it is required to forgive all men" (D&C 64:10). We must be willing to forgive others and even to forgive ourselves.

As we struggle toward that perfection which Jesus Christ holds out for us, let us give emphasis to forgiveness. Let us cultivate that aspect of our character and rejoice in the spirit of forgiveness, which is the comforting message of the Atonement. I pray that we may all cultivate that spirit, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

Elder Theodore M. Burton, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has just addressed us.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder Ted E. Brewerton, also a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy. Following Elder Brewerton's address, the Choir and congregation will join in singing "Come, Come, Ye Saints."

Elder Ted E. Brewerton

Which of the Lord's Ten Commandments is probably broken the most frequently? I believe it would be taking the name of God in vain. (See Exodus 20:7.)

Profanity and swearing

Today I should like to treat the important subject of profanity and swearing.

According to *Modern Guide to Synonyms* (p. 469), *profanity, blasphemy, cursing, obscenity, swearing, and vulgarity* all refer to crude or foul language. Profanity and blasphemy usually refer to the irreverent use of the name of Deity.

Socrates said to a young man who was introduced to him, "Talk in order that I may see you" (*Communication of Ideas*, p. 72).

We reveal ourselves with our speech. Shakespeare urged in *King Lear*, "Mend your speech a little, lest it may mar your fortunes" (act 1, sc. 1, line 96). If we err, then remember the words of Confucius: "A man who has committed a mistake and doesn't correct it is committing another mistake" (*Vital Quotations*, sel. Emerson Roy West [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1968], p. 228).

I desire to read to you many of the Lord's words given through his prophets over the years so we might understand and think as he does regarding improper words.

"Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain" (Exodus 20:7).

"But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth" (Colossians 3:8).

Result of swearing

Have we ever asked ourselves what is the harm or end result of swear-

ing? Jeremiah expresses one thought about it in this way:

"For because of swearing the land mourneth; the pleasant places of the wilderness are dried up" (Jeremiah 23:10).

President McKay speaks clearly regarding profane language: "No parent can consistently teach faith in Christ who profanes the name of Deity. Profanity is never heard in the well-ordered home. Swearing is a vice that bespeaks a low standard of breeding. Blasphemous exclamations drive out all spirit of reverence" (*Gospel Ideals* [Salt Lake City: Improvement Era, 1953], p. 420).

Judith Martin of the *Washington Post* writes the article "Miss Manners," which is syndicated in seventy-five other newspapers. She says regarding rudeness of speech:

"How does one deal with a rude person? Politely. I don't believe in answering rudeness with rudeness under any circumstances.

"How is that accomplished? With the stare or smile. I do not recommend the snappy comeback and putdown" (*People Magazine*, Aug. 1982, p. 38).

Politeness achieves much more than answering rudeness with rudeness. "Be patient in afflictions, *revile not against those that revile*" (D&C 31:9; italics added).

The Lord speaks with clarity on this subject through his prophets. President Joseph Fielding Smith states: "Profanity is filthiness. A person is known as much by his language as he is by the company he keeps. . . . Filthiness in any form is degrading and soul-destroying and should be avoided" (*Doctrines of Salvation* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft], 1:13).

If we are not most careful with our thoughts and speech, the words we use will use us. Language has its own ethics, and one who communicates truth is like a bright light in the

darkness. We must nurture language like that.

Words convey messages

How interesting it is to hear non-members of the Church express their feelings about bad language. I like very much the title and comments used by Bob Greene of the Field Newspaper Syndicate who speaks of swearing in these terms. The title he uses is "*Hear Pollution*."

"Obscenity, the open use of which used to be a mark of lower social strata, has somehow become acceptable in everyday conversation for everyday people.

"And yet, I am offended—not out of a sense of morality or of prudishness—but because foul language used casually in public comes close to the idea of a violation of privacy. I know that there are some around who feel assaulted by hearing it. I chose that word very carefully; certain language is an assault on the senses.

"Those who disagree are probably saying, 'after all, it's only words.' But words are vehicles; they convey messages. And to some people, the message of profanity is a message of ugliness and aggressiveness and a disrespect for civil behavior.

"Bathroom and sexual obscenities can now be heard in certain popular songs on the radio, and even some magazines and newspapers have begun to print language that would have been unthinkable five years ago. This practice is usually defended under the name of 'freedom.' But whose freedom is it? If the language of ugliness becomes so much a part of our society that it is impossible to escape no matter where one turns, then who is free and who isn't?"

These assaults on the senses and the messages they carry do not elevate—they pull people down.

Be incurable optimists

There is no place in this Church or in any of our families for pessimism or negativism. We should be incurable optimists.

Irrespective of the condition of a person, he who is a cynic, a pessimist, or negative has the least progress, happiness, and prosperity.

On the other hand, the Lord's way is that the optimist with faith, who is positive, elevating, and edifying, is the individual in or out of the Church who is the most progressive, happy, and prosperous. The Lord said:

"Therefore, strengthen your brethren in all your conversation, in all your prayers, in all your exhortations, and in all your doings" (D&C 108:7).

We should—

enlighten

edify

lift

motivate

elevate

build and uplift in all of our conversations and doings.

Now listen to the prophet's words as I read them, regarding encouraging, lifting, and edifying:

"Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers" (Ephesians 4:29).

"Cease to contend one with another; cease to speak evil one of another.

"... Let your words tend to edifying one another" (D&C 136:23–24).

In the magazine *Success Unlimited*, Dec. 1982, Dwight Chapin draws to our attention a crucial aspect of creating only positive emotions:

"Every time a business in the service industry creates a negative emotion in the mind of a customer or client, that individual will share his dissatisfaction with an average of ten people before the emotion dissipates.

"The same research shows that a person who is impressed with a service will share that positive emotion with an

average of only three other people at most. Given this situation it's obvious why negative news travels faster and farther than positive news."

That gives us all the more reason to be uplifting and positive. Profane words *never* edify.

Really listen to scriptures

There is some value in this expression of an unknown author: "I shall return again, for I like myself more when I am with you."

Peter and the associates of the Savior were greater because of the Savior. He built them, lifted them, and treated them as they were to become.

The associates of Joseph Smith were greater because of Joseph Smith. He raised them and strengthened them. So it has been with all the Presidents of the Church—men are greater because of them.

Church leaders do *not* spend time pulling down people or other institutions. They proclaim their own truths and allow others to express themselves.

The Brethren of the First Presidency have upon their shoulders the heaviest burden and responsibilities of any mortals—yet they are never heavy-hearted; one who enters their offices always leaves a better person than when he entered.

The Lord's counsel is very clear: "Give ye ear, and hear my voice; hearken, and hear my speech" (Isaiah 28:23).

Do we really *listen* as we read the scriptures? Do we really hear his voice, hearken, and do his will? There are many who *do* hear and follow him.

Here are some good examples of hearing and doing the Lord's counsel:

In 1974 there were only about eight or ten Brazilians serving missions. Then President Kimball asked for more missionaries. By mid-1979 Brazil had over five hundred full-time local missionaries serving, and Mexico had over seven hundred.

They heard his counsel, did they not?

When I was a mission president in Central America some years ago, two of the elders brought a Catholic Benedictine monk into my office.

He had noticed the *elevating nature* of the Church due to an in-depth study he and others had been commissioned to do of 243 different churches. This study had been ordered by the Catholic church with honorable intent; they wished to know the similarities of the 243 churches to see the possibilities of more union and brotherhood.

After researching for over five years, they came to at least these two conclusions:

1. There were only two churches that had high moral values; one was The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

2. There was only one church that followed all the prophetic utterances of old—in other words, accepted and followed all the Old and New Testament—that was the Mormons.

This monk accepted the challenge to study the Book of Mormon and prayed to have divine verification of its truthfulness. As a result, he accepted the Savior by being baptized into this, His Church.

He is now an active teacher in a high priests quorum in Central America.

He saw by investigation the edifying, lifting influence of the Church and hearkened unto the voice of the Lord.

Have mastery over tongue and words

A prominent man who had not visited a certain northern Utah high school for some two years attended a sports event and was appalled and offended by the escalation of profanity and crude language he heard.

Parents, do we wonder where our families or children are hearing obscene, crude, and foul words? Certainly *never* in our homes, for our

homes are next to the temple in sacredness. They are an uplifting refuge, in which we instruct our families as to what the Lord expects of us.

Self-control is an effective quality that lifts anyone above the crowd; a memory of a self-controlled person will always be pleasant. We should never lower our dignity by lowering our language. We don't ever repeat a profane comment made by someone else. In the text *Teaching—No Greater Call* we read this regarding self-mastery:

"The height of a man's success is gauged by his self-mastery; the depth of his failure by his self-abandonment. There is no other limitation in either direction. And this law is the expression of eternal justice.

"He who cannot establish a dominion over himself will have no dominion over others, he who masters himself shall be king" (as cited by

Spencer W. Kimball, *Improvement Era*, June 1966, p. 525).

Shouldn't we all have mastery over our tongues and words *all* of the time, and only elevate and edify?

We are in the presence of and being directed by living prophets. This is an absolute truth. The Lord himself directs this, his only true and living church, and I testify to this in the name of Jesus Christ, the Master, amen.

The Choir and congregation sang
"Come, Come, Ye Saints."

President Benson

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder Jacob de Jager, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy. We shall then hear from Elder L. Tom Perry, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder Jacob de Jager

I am very pleased and happy and grateful for this opportunity to speak to the Saints in this historic place and to the Saints in other places where I have been assigned to conferences recently—to Hurricane, Utah, and Wendell, Idaho. I have many friends there. It's a real privilege for me to share my testimony this afternoon and give the thoughts that are in my heart.

From balloons to spaceships

Since the beginning of recorded history, man has marveled at the mysteries of the sky and has had a desire to escape the bonds of gravity.

Yet the first recorded balloon ascent was the unmanned flight launched by the Montgolfier brothers in Lyon, France, in the year 1783, which was followed shortly thereafter by the first

known manned flight from the Bois de Boulogne in Paris.

What is the situation in 1983, two hundred years later?

Man has been to the moon and has sent spaceships to distant planets. Close to three hundred satellites have been put into an earth orbit 22,300 miles above the equator to expand television and telex communications and also to study and forecast weather conditions. Yesterday, and last night during the general priesthood meeting, we were able to reach by satellite more than half a million priesthood holders at the same time.

Let's realize that all of these innovations have their origin, however, in ballooning, which gave mankind a first new perspective on his home planet as well as a physical and spiritual uplift in silent flight.

Lessons in ballooning

I have personally experienced, though only once, the exhilaration of a real balloon flight. It was during the exciting time immediately following World War II when in Holland, my native country, many public festivities were held to celebrate the regained liberty after five years of war. There were big parades, neighborhood dance festivals, and in some cities manned balloon flights to attract large crowds for yet other festive events.

A friend taught me a lot about ballooning in preparation for a flight that I was promised to be able to make as a guest, when at some future date the weather conditions would be suitable.

I learned that we would go up in a class A gas balloon filled with coal gas and that it would ascend until its weight would be in equilibrium with the air around it.

I also learned that in the wicker basket under the balloon there were navigational instruments, maps, and ballast sandbags, which could be emptied overboard to make the balloon rise higher.

Furthermore, I discovered that if gas is released from a balloon through a valve, it descends. But this was not all! I also heard from my friend many delightful stories about previous balloon flights. On one occasion, as the story goes, clouds developed unexpectedly during a flight, and the two men in the wicker basket had not the faintest idea over which part of the country they were sailing.

They decided to lower the balloon, and all of a sudden they saw a Dutchman walking on a lonely country road. When they were able to draw his attention, one of the men in the basket shouted: "Where are we?" And the lonely walker looked up, cupped his hands around his mouth, and shouted back, "You are in a balloon."

To make their urgent request for direction more clear, the man in the balloon cried vigorously, "Where are you?" And the man called back at the

top of his voice, "I am on the ground!"

Discouraged, the balloonists unloaded some ballast and sailed again into the clouds, while one of them remarked: "The man down there must be a bureaucrat." The statements he made were perfectly true, but totally useless!

Parallel between ballooning and spiritual upward mobility

After what I have shared with you thus far, I have come to the conclusion that a strong parallel can be drawn between the steady rise of a balloon and *our* spiritual upward mobility.

Just as gas is necessary to fill a balloon to push it upward, so must the individual be filled with inner motivation in order to move upward. Just as the balloon can rise higher by throwing ballast overboard, so must a person be willing to rid himself of unnecessary ballast that limits his rise in spirituality.

When I made my balloon flight, strangely enough, I did not have the feeling that I was going up. I had the impression that I remained stationary, as it were, and the world floated silently away from me.

Later, when through the missionary effort I joined the Church, I gained as a new member that peaceful feeling of being safely placed in the environment of true gospel living and that Babylon had floated away from me. As it was expressed by an early European balloonist: "I felt as though I had left behind me, all the cares and passions that molest mankind."

I testify that we all can have that peace of mind if we are willing to rid ourselves of the ballast that prevents us from rising to greater spiritual heights. It will facilitate our ascent to a loving Father in Heaven, who will, in his due time, await our return after our journey through life.

Sandbag of impatience

Let us, therefore, get rid of our sandbag of impatience and learn to be more patient with our spouses and children, our friends and neighbors, because the Lord has counseled us to "continue in patience until ye are perfected"! (D&C 67:13).

And for those of you who do not know what the word *patience* really means, I offer a simple definition: Patience is learning to hide your impatience.

Ballast bag called criticism

And how many of us still go through life with a ballast bag called criticism? We should, instead, give more praise wherever and whenever possible because we have been told and retold, "Cease to find fault one with another" (D&C 88:124). And let us in this respect also remember that the faults and shortcomings we see in the members of our own ward or branch are of less consequence to us than one of the smallest in ourselves.

Bags of unfriendliness, pride, and greed

Furthermore, do we still have a sandbag with unfriendliness in our basket, even though the Savior asks us to be friendly and loving? As he said: "Ye are they whom my Father hath given me; ye are my friends" (D&C 84:63).

While on our spiritual flight, let us totally empty our ballast bag of pride and be more humble in all things, always remembering the Savior's glorious promise to all: "And inasmuch as you have humbled yourselves before me, the blessings of the kingdom are yours" (D&C 61:37).

And will we really ascend in our spiritual balloon if we are not prepared to dispose of our sandbag of greed? Living prophets have counseled us to pay an honest tithing and to give a generous fast offering; and, moreover, the

scriptures reveal in a very candid way: "Wo unto [them] that [do] not give [of their] substance to the poor" (D&C 56:16). And, unfortunately, some people think they are being generous because they give so much free advice!

Ballast of frustrations

Finally, we must get rid of the heavy ballast of frustrations. All of us must discover in the wicker basket of our personal spiritual balloon those frustrations against which we continually have to be on guard. It was revealed unto us, and we have already heard it twice from this pulpit in this conference: "The works, and the designs, and the purposes of God cannot be frustrated, neither can they come to naught. . . . Remember that it is not the work of God that is frustrated, but the work of men" (D&C 3:1, 3).

Cut the cords

The only way we can move upward from our present level of spirituality and performance to a higher level is by doing away with the ballast that holds us back. We have to learn to live the commandments, not only for our own good, but also for the good of other people because we reform others unconsciously when we keep the commandments of God and live the teachings of the Church. That's another way of doing missionary work and lifting the spirituality of those around us.

Therefore, let's start our flight today. If we are still at ground level, let's cut the cords; and our rise will start immediately! However, even that will not ensure our continuous spiritual mobility. Our balloon will rise only so high and then will begin to stall. At that time we have to investigate what ballast we need to get rid of in order to rise even higher. If you find it hard to cut the cords, you will find it even harder to do away with the sandbags to lighten your load.

The balloon trip of our spiritual upward mobility is a demanding and

sometimes difficult adventure, and only the person with true perseverance will make it to the highest realm!

Remove restraining weight from spiritual flight

In closing, after talking about flying, sailing, and rising, I would like to give some down-to-earth guidelines.

To those who are within the sound of my voice this day and who have already entered the wicker basket of their spiritual balloon through baptism into the kingdom of God but who are just sitting there, waiting inactively for things to happen, cut the cords that hold you back from lift-off.

To those who are quietly drifting at the same elevation with little upward mobility, take a close look at the ballast that prevents you from going to a higher level of performance. Make a decision and remove the restraining weight from your spiritual flight.

I give you a solemn promise that if you do this, you will enjoy a feeling

of spiritual euphoria because you will elevate yourself.

Follow Heavenly Father's flight plan

I testify—as one who twenty-three years ago was baptized into the kingdom of God in Toronto, Canada—that my flight since my baptism has been a magnificent one, with breathtaking scenes and spiritual panoramas and with the never-failing knowledge that my day-to-day flight plan is made available to me by an understanding, loving, forgiving Heavenly Father.

The same is true for all of us! How do I know this? Because I know with all my heart that God lives and that Jesus is the Christ. He is the Savior of mankind, the Great Mediator for the salvation and exaltation of all of our Heavenly Father's children, if they are willing to follow his outlined flight plan. Of which I testify this day, gratefully and happily, and in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Elder L. Tom Perry

"Train up a child in the way he should go," writes the author of Proverbs, "and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6).

Children need attention

My mind was drawn to this admonition recently while reading an article in one of our current news publications on "Our Neglected Kids." The article pointed out that "most of them are properly clothed and fed, but something is missing in the lives of countless children." For many of them, "it is a matter of needing more attention from their parents," who are caught up in everyday pressures.

The article says:

"In a nation that professes to take pride in its young, . . . social change is

inflicting harm—physical and psychological—on millions of children. For them, growing up in America is becoming an ordeal instead of a joy.

"As their parents struggle to cope with divorce, single parenthood, dual careers, and a troublesome economy, many of the nation's more than 47.6 million children under the age of 14 pay the price in ways that range from simple neglect to outright abuse. . . .

"Parents are caught in a crunch of conflicting values," the article points out, quoting Edward Weaver. "They value children, but they value other things as well, such as time for themselves, material goods, status and their careers. Given these conflicts, in a number of instances they neglect children or don't give them a fair shake"

(*U.S. News and World Report*, 9 Aug. 1982, p. 54).

As I travel outside the boundaries of this country, I seem to find these same problems growing elsewhere. These are danger signals for our children. We find more mothers with jobs, more single-parent homes, an enormous increase in children born out of wedlock. These growing social changes are causing increased difficulty for the children in our society today.

Pleasure of being a parent

Articles such as the one I have quoted deeply trouble me, for I had such a pleasant, happy childhood. The pleasure of being a parent has always been special to me. It is impossible to express the love I have for my children and grandchildren.

I marvel at the miracle of the birth of a child. Just recently we experienced it again in our family. You receive a phone call, and there is the anxious voice of your son-in-law on the other end, stating, "I am just on my way to the hospital with Linda Gay." Then you sit anxiously all day waiting for further news. Finally it comes: It's a boy! Then you drop everything and rush to the hospital to offer your congratulations. There you see this blessed miracle—your own child, now with a baby cradled in her arms with warmth and tender love. You see a son-in-law so excited, and he starts pointing out that the baby's nose looks like his mother's. Maybe the chin and mouth resemble his. Then he looks at the hands and says, "Surely, these must be from the Perry side of the family. Look how large they are!"

A deep love wells up within you as you witness this blessed event and realize the joy and happiness these new parents will now have as the process is repeated again in their lives.

Responsibility of being a parent

I am surely not an authority on child rearing. I have had my challenges, just as many parents have experienced. However, since reading this article, I have been directed to the words of the prophets, past and present, stressing the importance of the responsibility of a parent to train up a child.

In the Old Testament, there is an account of the Lord giving instructions to Moses just before He delivered the Ten Commandments to him. It states:

"The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth,

"Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation" (Exodus 34:6-7).

In the New Testament, Paul, writing to the Ephesians, counseled them:

"And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4).

The Book of Mormon begins with a son giving credit to the training of goodly parents:

"I, Nephi, having been born of goodly parents, therefore I was taught somewhat in all the learning of my father" (1 Nephi 1:1).

Instructions through the Prophet Joseph Smith to members of the Church in this day are explicit regarding the responsibilities of parents to children:

"And again, inasmuch as parents have children in Zion, or in any of her stakes which are organized, that teach them not to understand the doctrines of repentance, faith in Christ the Son of the living God, and of baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of the hands, when eight years old, the sin be upon the heads of the parents" (D&C 68:25).

Teach children faith, obedience, and love

At the time I was a new parent, President David O. McKay presided over the Church. His counsel was clear and direct regarding our responsibilities to our children. He taught us the most precious gift a man and woman can receive is a child of God, and that the raising of a child is basically, fundamentally, and most exclusively a *spiritual process*.

He directed us to basic principles we need to teach our children. The first and most important inner quality you can instill in a child is *faith in God*. The first and most important action a child can learn is *obedience*. And the most powerful tool you have with which to teach a child is *love*. (See *Instructor*, Dec. 1949, p. 620).

Let us examine together these three basic principles. President Brigham Young instructed parents by saying:

"If each and every one of us who are parents will reflect upon the responsibilities devolving upon us, we shall come to the conclusion that we should never permit ourselves to do anything that we are not willing to see our children do. We should set them an example that we wish them to imitate" (*Journal of Discourses*, 14:192).

Instill faith in God

If we are to instill faith in our children, they must see us demonstrate our faith in their young lives. They must see us on our knees daily, asking the Lord for His blessings and expressing our gratitude unto Him. They need to see us using our priesthood to administer to those in need, and to bless our children. They need to see us reverently worshiping in our sacrament meetings. They need to see us cheerfully and willingly giving of our time and talents to the building of the Lord's kingdom here on earth. They need to see us proving our faith by the payment of our tithes and offerings to Him.

They need to see us diligently studying and discussing the scriptures to increase our faith and understanding.

I read recently an article in a magazine designed especially for Latter-day Saints about a study that was made of the benefits of reading to children. It stated that when a mother or a father consistently reads to a child, the child enters school at a much higher level and excels in reading during these early grades. If there is a direct correlation between the early training a child receives from parents and the rapidity with which a child learns, how important would it be, then, for us to spend time reading the gospel of Jesus Christ to our children, to imbue and instill in them, in their tender and early years, faith in the gospel of our Lord and Savior?

Help child learn obedience

The second principle President McKay outlined for us is *obedience*. President Joseph Fielding Smith has said: "Of course there should be prayer and faith and love and obedience to God in the home. It is the duty of parents to teach their children these saving principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ, so that they will know why they are to be baptized and that they may be impressed in their hearts with a desire to continue to keep the commandments of God after they are baptized, that they may come back into his presence. Do you, my good brethren and sisters, want your families, your children; do you want to be sealed to your fathers and your mothers before you? . . . If so, then you must begin by teaching at the cradle-side. You are to teach by example as well as precept" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1948, p. 153).

I remember being impressed one time with the need to teach obedience. I was on a new job working long hours, and I guess I was somewhat neglectful of my family. My son seemed to crave more time and attention. He was finding all sorts of ways to attract my attention. One day when I came home,

his mother had him prepared to take me downstairs to see what mischief he had recently created. As we descended the stairs, he sheepishly opened the door to our food storage room. There I found he had been using his dart set to practice his marksmanship on our food storage. He caught my attention all right, and made me realize he was looking for the metes and bounds we expected of him in our family government. When they were outlined, and when I gave him the proper attention, then he was very obedient. How important it is that we teach obedience early in the lives of our children, especially to the commandments of the Lord!

Use the tool of love

Finally, President McKay taught us the necessity of *love*. I've always been impressed with the fact that when the Lord was teaching His disciples in those final hours of His earthly ministry as they met in the Last Supper, after teaching service by the washing of their feet, His next instructions concerned love. He taught,

"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another" (John 13:34).

I recently enjoyed an article in the *Reader's Digest* written about enduring values. It stated "that the climate of our times tends to support the idea that love is a seasonal monsoon: it comes, it blows fiercely; it goes by. That is too bad, because a child needs the kind of love that is as trustworthy as the rising of the sun. If a child is to grow up to truly join the human race, he needs to know how to keep love alive.

"A child should learn not merely to love, but to be a loving person—to make love his stance in the world. 'Love' may come and go, but a loving person, like the sun itself, never loses his or her sustaining warmth" (*Reader's Digest*, June 1981, p. 164).

Sometime ago I remember reading about an experiment with chickens. I do not remember the source. Young pullets, as they grew in their life cycle, were given all of the food they needed to eat, without being required to make an effort to obtain it. Then as the pullets matured, they were turned out into the chicken coop, where they had to scratch for their food. A chicken who had never been taught how to scratch as a pullet would mature without learning this ability and would literally starve to death, even though just below the surface of the ground was all the food it needed to sustain life.

Then the article went on to compare this example with a child who was not taught the ability to love early in its life. In all probability, according to the article, the child would not be able to develop that choice characteristic as it matured to adulthood. How tragic it would be if a child were deprived of the ability to love!

A strong family

Today, I would like you to pause, ponder, and think of the value of an immortal soul, especially the ones entrusted to you as parents. Where are your priorities? Have you committed yourself to give the sufficient time necessary to train your children?

Dr. Nick Stinnett of the University of Nebraska gave a most interesting talk at an annual meeting of the National Council on Family Relations. It was titled "Characteristics of Strong Families." His six points were:

1. A strong family spends a significant amount of time together while playing, working, eating, or in recreation. Although family members all have outside interests, they find adequate time to spend together.

2. Strong families have a high degree of commitment to each family member, as indicated not only by the time spent together, but also by their ability to work together in a common cause.

3. Strong families have good communication patterns, as indicated by the time spent listening and speaking to each other in conversation.

4. Strong families have a high degree of religious orientation.

5. Strong families have the ability to deal with crises in a positive way because they have spent time together, are committed to each other, and have good communication patterns.

6. Strong family members frequently give compliments to each other which are genuine and not superficial. (See "In Search of Strong Families," in *Building Family Strengths: Blueprints for Action*, ed. Nick Stinnett, et al. [Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1979], pp. 23-30.)

We who have embraced the gospel of Jesus Christ ought to have the devotion and the determination necessary to build strong family units. May God bless us that we may "organize [ourselves]; prepare every needful thing; and establish a house" (D&C 109:8) for those we love that is worthy of an eternal family unit is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

Elder L. Tom Perry, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just spoken to us.

Before hearing President Hinckley's concluding remarks, which I am sure we all anticipate with pleasure, we should like to express, on behalf of all who have listened to the singing during sessions of this general conference, appreciation and our sincere gratitude to the Tabernacle Choir, the Young Men-Young Women choir, and Ricks College men's choir, and to their conductors and accompanists.

We thank our city officials for the cooperation given this conference, the Relief Society and Church Health Unit nurses who have been on hand to render service throughout the conference, and the ushers and interpreters.

We express appreciation to the local and national press representatives for the coverage given to the conference and to the owners and managers of the many radio and television stations and cable systems who have given public service time to carry sessions of this conference in many countries.

The Assembly Hall on Temple Square has been thoroughly renovated and a new organ installed. The building is being used for the first time this conference since the renovation was completed. Because of the scope of the renovation, the building will be rededicated at special services to be held this evening at 7:00 P.M. However, due to the limited seating capacity of the building, we regret that the rededication service will not be open to the public. Only the General Authorities and general officers of the Church and their companions and some of the leaders of local regions, stakes, and wards who have been accustomed to holding their conferences in the Assembly Hall and their companions have been invited.

We shall now be pleased to listen to President Gordon B. Hinckley, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, who will be the concluding speaker of the conference, after which the Tabernacle Choir will sing "God Be with You."

The benediction will be offered by Elder George P. Lee, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

This conference will then stand adjourned for six months.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

My brethren and sisters, ordinarily President Spencer W. Kimball would be occupying this position. I am satisfied that many of you were seriously disappointed that you have not had the opportunity of seeing him or hearing from him on this occasion. As I indicated yesterday morning, he is showing the effects of his advanced age and the rigorous life which he has lived. However, he rises each day and dresses, and we consult with him frequently. If President Kimball could not be here, President Romney would be doing this. But he isn't here, either. And as President Romney remarked last October at the priesthood meeting, "It looks as if they've left it to the kids."

Great worldwide church

You will now be returning to your homes. Many of you will return to the various nations of Europe, to Africa, and to the many nations of South America. Others will return to Australia and New Zealand and the islands of the Pacific, to Mexico and Central America, and to the lands of Asia. Many will return to their homes in Canada and across the United States. The miracle of this work as it spreads over the earth never escapes me. I took occasion here to open the testimony of Joseph Smith concerning the words spoken to him when a young man seventeen years of age. He was visited by Moroni in the night, and he reports, "He [Moroni] called me by name, and said unto me that he was a messenger sent from the presence of God to me, and that his name was Moroni; that God had a work for me to do; and that my name should be had for good and evil among all nations, kindreds, and tongues, or that it should be both good and evil spoken of among all people" (Joseph Smith—History 1:33).

We see in this congregation today a fulfillment of those remarkable

words of prophecy. This has become a great, cosmopolitan church. We rejoice in the tremendous growth of the work across the world. We are thankful for your great faith and faithfulness. We all look upon one another as brothers and sisters, regardless of the land we call home. We belong to what may be regarded as the greatest society of friends on the face of the earth.

Fellowship of the Saints

When the emperor of Japan was in the United States some few years ago, I attended a luncheon for him in San Francisco. We sat at a table with three other couples who had had extensive experience in Japan and who had resided there at one time or another while working in government, business, or educational employment. One of the gentlemen said to me, "I have never seen anything like your people. We had many Americans come to Japan while we were there, and most of them experienced a severe cultural adjustment and much loneliness and homesickness. But whenever we had a Mormon family come, they had many instant friends. Members of your church in Japan seemed to know when they were expected and were there to welcome them. They and their children were immediately integrated socially as well as into your religious community. There seemed to be no culture shock and no loneliness. My wife and I talked about it many times."

That is the way it should be. We must be friends. We must love and honor and respect and assist one another. Wherever Latter-day Saints go, they are made welcome, because Latter-day Saints are mutual believers in the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ and are engaged together in his great cause.

We speak of the fellowship of the Saints. This is and must be a very real thing. We must never permit this

spirit of brotherhood and sisterhood to weaken. We must constantly cultivate it. It is an important aspect of the gospel.

Basic declaration of our theology

Now, brethren and sisters, we have had a wonderful conference, a marvelous conference. All who have spoken have done so under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The music has been superb. We are deeply grateful to all who have participated—speakers, those who have offered prayers, and those who have lifted our souls with music.

As we return to our homes let us contemplate the things we have heard. Let us go with resolution and determination to more fully live the gospel. "We believe in being honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, and in doing good to all men; indeed, we may say that we follow the admonition of Paul—We believe all things, we hope all things, we have endured many things, and hope to be able to endure all things. If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things" (Article of Faith 13).

That article of our faith is one of the basic declarations of our theology. During this great conference we have been reminded of many of the virtues set forth in that brief statement. We ought to reflect on it again and again. I wish that every family in the Church would write out that article of faith and put it on a mirror where every member of the family would see it every day. Then, whenever we might be tempted to do anything shoddy or dishonest or immoral, there would come into our minds with some force this great, all-encompassing statement of the ethics of our behavior. There would be less rationalizing over some elements of our personal conduct which we try to justify with one excuse or another.

Brethren advocating reading from Gospels and Third Nephi

Some would have us believe that the area between good and evil is largely gray and that it is difficult to determine what is right and what is wrong. For any who so believe, I recommend this beautiful statement of Moroni found in the Book of Mormon: "For behold, the Spirit of Christ is given to every man, that he may know good from evil; wherefore, I show unto you the way to judge; for everything which inviteth to do good, and to persuade to believe in Christ, is sent forth by the power and gift of Christ; wherefore ye may know with a perfect knowledge it is of God" (Moroni 7:16).

Let us establish in our lives the habit of reading those things which will strengthen our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world. He is the pivotal figure of our theology and our faith. Every Latter-day Saint has the responsibility to know for himself or herself with a certainty beyond doubt that Jesus is the resurrected, living Son of the living God. The Brethren of the Council of the Twelve are advocating that we read a chapter a day of the Gospels—that is, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John in the Bible; and Third Nephi in the Book of Mormon, particularly beginning with the eleventh chapter of Third Nephi where is found the account of Christ's visit among the Nephites in this hemisphere. I should like to endorse this program and commend it to you and urge you to follow it.

"Fear not to do good"

Brethren and sisters, we have nothing to fear if we stay on the Lord's side. If we will be prayerful, seeking wisdom from God, who is the source of all true wisdom; if we will cultivate a spirit of love and peace and harmony in our homes; if we will fulfill our assigned responsibilities in the Church with enthusiasm and faithfulness; if we

will reach out to our neighbors and others in a spirit of Christian love and appreciation, helping those in distress wherever we may find them; if we will be honest with the Lord in the payment of our tithes and offerings, we shall be blessed as God has promised. Our Father has made explicit covenants with his people. He is in a position to keep those covenants. It is my testimony that he does so.

May I read to you in conclusion these great, reassuring words given by the Lord long ago to this people: "Fear not to do good, my sons, for whatsoever ye sow, that shall ye also reap. . . .

"Fear not, little flock; do good; let earth and hell combine against you, for if ye are built upon my rock, they cannot prevail. . . .

"Look unto me in every thought; doubt not, fear not" (D&C 6:33-34, 36).

Love and blessing of First Presidency and other Brethren

In closing I give to you the love and blessing of President Spencer W.

Kimball, of his Counselor President Marion G. Romney, and of all of my Brethren of the General Authorities. To this I add my own expression to you of gratitude for your sustaining influence, for your devoted service, and for your expressions of faith. May the Lord bless you generously, as he will if you will walk in faith. For this I humbly pray as I leave with you my testimony and witness that I know that God our Eternal Father lives, that Jesus is the Christ, the living resurrected Savior of mankind, and that this Church in which we have the honor to serve is their church restored to the earth for the blessing of all of our Father's children who will give heed to its message. God bless you. May he be with you in all things, at all times, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The Choir sang "God Be with You."

Elder George P. Lee offered the benediction.

SALT LAKE TABERNACLE CHOIR AND ORGAN BROADCAST

The following broadcast, announced by J. Spencer Kinard and originating with KSL Radio and Television, Salt Lake City, Utah, was presented from 9:30 to 10:00 A.M. on Sunday, April 3, 1983, through the courtesy of the Columbia Broadcasting System's network throughout the United States, parts of Canada, and through other facilities to several points overseas:

Announcer: Once more we welcome you within these walls with Music and

the Spoken Word from the crossroads of the West.

CBS and its affiliated stations bring you at this hour the Mormon Tabernacle Choir from Temple Square in Salt Lake City, with Jerold Ottley conducting the Choir, John Longhurst, Tabernacle organist, and the Spoken Word given by Spencer Kinard.

(Choir without announcement: "Halleluia Sing!"—Wilkinson)

Announcer: "Christ, the Lord is ris'n, Halleluia Sing." The Tabernacle Choir has sung these words in praise of

Sunday, April 3, 1983

Second Day

the Savior's resurrection, set to music by Scott Wilkinson.

We next hear an American spiritual in a setting by H. T. Burleigh, "Were You There when they crucified my Lord?"

(Choir: "Were You There?"
—arr. Burleigh)

Announcer: The Tabernacle Choir next sings music by Crawford Gates set to a biblical text proclaiming the message of Easter, "He Is Not Here."

(Choir: "He Is Not Here"
—Gates)

Announcer: At the console of the Tabernacle organ John Longhurst plays a seventeenth century chorale by Johann Crueger, followed by a prelude by Johannes Brahms based on that melody "Beloved Jesus."

(Organ: "Beloved Jesus"
—Brahms)

Announcer: Jerusalem stirred with passion that Sunday before the Passover. Travelers had clustered there bringing sacrificial lambs. Coins clattered in coffers where pigeons were sold, and in the temple yard merchants were busy earning silver off the celebration. But above the hubbub hung a question: Would the prophet from Galilee come? "What think ye, that he will not come to the feast?" they asked one another (John 11:56).

Even as they wondered, Jesus Christ's Apostles had fetched him a young donkey for his entry into the city. It was to be his last entry, so he paused for a moment at the Mount of Olives, looking across at the golden city—and he wept. Not for himself, though he knew his death was imminent, but for Jerusalem, a city whose walls and children would be ground into the earth. Then he proceeded.

Word spread ahead that he was coming. And as he did, the babble of voices united into an uproar of adulation. "Hosanna to the Son of David," they cried. "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord"

(Matthew 21:9). Even before he made it to the gates of the city, crowds were thronging the way, waving palm fronds and myrtle, spreading their garments in his path.

They were giving him a messianic welcome. For this moment, at least, they were his people and he was their king. He came not with armies, but riding a gentle animal, and they believed they adored him.

Where was this crowd just five days later when Jesus hobbled to Golgotha, bent under a cross? History does not tell us. Their shouts had been carried away on the wind, their palm fronds withered, and so Christ went alone to be crucified.

As we contemplate a lonely Savior on a hillside cross, we may feel critical of this crowd whose love was so brief, but it should teach us something deeper. It is the human tendency for even the most righteous enthusiasm to wane. We are inspired, see with clarity, and then the fog rushes in. We seek to proclaim our love of the Lord, and then circumstances teach us forgetfulness. We mean to amend our character, and then the urgency leaves. We shout for the Lord one day and turn our backs the next. When we hope that we would have been one to rush out and carry his cross, we need to examine whether even now our shouts swell and ebb on a fickle wind.

Announcer: We now hear the Choir sing a nineteenth century hymn tune with a text by Charles Wesley, in a choral setting by Robert Cundick: "Hail the Day that sees him rise, Alleluia."

(Choir: "Hail the Day"
—Williams-Roberts/Cundick)

(Choir without announcement:
"Beautiful Savior"—arr. Cornwall)

Announcer: "Of all the stars in heav'n above, Jesus shines brighter and brings to all the world His love." We have heard the Choir sing this twelfth century text to the melody of a Silesian folk song in a setting by the late Taber-

nacle Choir conductor, J. Spencer Cornwall.

We close today's broadcast with music from the oratorio *The Redemption* by Charles Gounod, "Unfold, Ye Portals . . . (and) receive Him ascending on high."

(Choir: "Unfold, Ye Portals"
—Gounod)

Announcer: Again we leave you from within the shadows of the everlasting hills. May peace be with you this day . . . and always.

Announcer (on radio): This concludes the two-thousand, seven-

hundred, ninety-eighth performance continuing the fifty-fourth year of this traditional broadcast from the Mormon Tabernacle on Temple Square, brought to you by CBS and its affiliated stations, originating with Station KSL in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Jerold Ottley conducted the Choir, John Longhurst was at the organ, the Spoken Word was given by Spencer Kinard.

In another seven days at this same hour, Music and the Spoken Word will be heard again from the crossroads of the West.

This is the CBS Radio Network.

SUMMARY OF CONFERENCE MUSIC

The Tabernacle Choir furnished the choral numbers for the Saturday morning, Sunday morning, and Sunday afternoon sessions of the conference with Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger conducting.

The music for the Saturday afternoon session was provided by a Young Men—Young Women choir from the Ensign, Granite, Pioneer, Rose Park, Liberty, and Monument Park regions, directed by Margaret C. Richards.

At the general priesthood meeting the Ricks College men's choir from

Rexburg, Idaho furnished the music, directed by Richard Robison and Noel Brown.

Prelude, postlude, and interlude music and accompaniments on the Tabernacle organ throughout the conference sessions were played by Robert Cundick, John Longhurst, Roy M. Darley, and Clay Christiansen, Tabernacle organists.

Francis M. Gibbons
Clerk of the Conference

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